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ILLUSTRATIONS
OF
HUMAN LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ TREMAINE ” AND “ DE VERE . ”

“ I can truly say, that of all the papers I have blotted, which have been a good deal in my time, I have never written any thing for the public without the intention of some public good. Whether I have succeeded or not, is not my part to judge.”—SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

FIELDING ; OR, SOCIETY.

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F I E L D I N G; .

OR,

SOCIETY.

(CONCLUSION OF PART III.)



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FIELDING ;

OR,

SOCIETY.

SECTION XIII.

FIELDING GOES TO A COUNTY BALL.

“ I delight in masques and revels sometimes altogether.”

TWELFTH NIGHT.

“ They bid us to the English dancing school,
And teach lavoltas, high and swift corantos.”

HENRY V.

THE evening came ; the ball opened, and every heart beat high. Yes ! D—— House, or Carlton House, or Almacks itself may hold their heads up as high as they please ! Neither grandeur, beauty, nobility, nor London elegance, can with all their charms equal the interest, and therefore the pleasure, kindled by a county ball. O ! the dreams of partners ; the bales of ribands and gauzes ; the tailors and mantua makers ; the sweetmeats and cold meats ; the cocks and fiddlers ; the purveyors and perfumers put in requisition ! The innkeepers

already counting their gains; the dancing-masters drilling their pupils; the universal agitation among the towns-people, particularly as to what set they may get into, and whether the country families will be courteous, and not herd by themselves: all this, for a fortnight together, make the happy town, which is to be the scene of so much glory, one of the most instructive, as well as pleasant fields for a practical philosopher that can be imagined. The universality and equality of rights in the parties that are to meet, which can be controlled by no conventional obstructions, privileges of caste, or self-conferred importance, render the race open to all who choose to run. It comes but once a year; it is almost a Saturnalia. Hence, there is no room for disguise; the great appear in an undress; the little are little better for dressing; (I speak of their minds, not their bodies;)—and thus all is nature and genuine feeling. The touchstone of such a scene of action is finer than even May Fair can supply.

To begin with the higher orders, as in duty bound. They receive all the incense that is paid them as their due. They are worshipped *at first*; they sit under canopies, and on cloths of state; or for want of those an exclusive sofa does as well. They bend or unbend with or without affability, as the case may require, or the whim prompt:

they get together and talk, or are silent and thought fine; or for a moment mix, and are gracious. At any rate they are observed of all, and look strange, or look kind, and encourage or depress the gazing throng, who look upon them as superior beings. But all this, as I observed, *only at first*. Sooner or later (sometimes very soon) the enchantment breaks, and having perused them, and got by heart every feature of their faces, every fold of their dress, and every turn of their carriage, the gazers are satisfied as to curiosity, and perhaps not a little as to self-love, at finding that my Lord, or my Lady, or Sir Harry, are very little different, and certainly very little better than themselves.

Dancing begins; the ceremonial among the great is interrupted; more equality is introduced; the youthful high are even criticised by the youthful low, who think themselves almost as good. Mr. Kitt, the town dancing-master, is breathless in observing Lady Wilhelmina Grandborough's motions, and comparing her with Miss Amelia Nebbs, his favourite pupil, who has spread her own and his fame beyond the purlieus of the town. At first he is struck with a certain *tournure*, and some new steps of Lady Wilhelmina, which he has not before witnessed. Then he begins to wonder if her Ladyship was one of Monsieur Vestris' best scholars; and at last really begins to believe that Miss

Amelia Nebbs is quite equal to Lady Wilhelmina in a gallopade, though, perhaps, inferior in a waltz !

But supper is announced. Alas ! the high table is bespoke, occupied ; each chair guarded by Lady Grandborough's footmen till the great personage shall arrive. But there have been other great personages all the while in the room, equal in rank, equal in importance, equal in following,—Lord and Lady Drelincourt. They will not mix with the Grandboroughs. The Lords are of opposite politics, and rivals for the county ; the Ladies hate one another, because the Countess of Drelincourt feels herself better born, and thinks herself better ton than the Lady Grandborough ; and the Lady Grandborough believes herself far handsomer than the Countess of Drelincourt.

“ Non nostrum est inter vos ;” but what shall prevent all these little strivings in the upper regions (though conducted with perfect good-breeding,) from spreading among the lower with not quite so much good-humour ? In fact, the whole evening through, rivalry of all kinds prevailed :—rivalry in beauty, rivalry in love ; rivalry in dress, taste, accomplishments ; rivalry in notice of the higher orders, and be sure in politics. This last, indeed, was pointedly visible in the great leaders of the assembly themselves ; and many a smile, or attempt at one, was interrupted or turned into a frown,

on the increase or decrease of the respective followings which each party had. The extraordinary condescensions of the Drelincourts to persons, though of little degree, who were influential at elections, was most amusing. The Earl waltzed himself out of breath with an "eminent" malster's wife; while, on the other hand, the smart son of as "eminent" a clothier, was permitted to go *half down* a country dance with Lady Wilhelmina Grandborough, when the Lady declared she was so fatigued that she could go no farther. Mem. Nevertheless, she afterwards stood up with a Mr. Fawknor, one of her own party, of whom more anon; and Mr. Kitt declared she was, in activity, almost equal to Miss Amelia Nebbs herself.

Was not this worth a journey from London to see? and shall any one say there is but one world in Great Britain? Notwithstanding, however, some heart burnings, and many dissimulations, there was, upon the whole, much nature, and a great deal, if not of happiness, at least of excitement. The county members were in high request, of course, almost equalling the two Earls; and their wives were in glory, for they were almost courted by the two Countesses. The latter even shared their sofas with them; and one, *it was said* (but this was never proved), was overheard to say something about visiting town.

Being known by these extremely high people, I was exceeding well received by every body else, and thus was let a good deal into the play of all ranks, with much profit to my speculation ; in which I was glad to see that the scale of happiness greatly preponderated. An ascetic, or stoic, might indeed say a great deal to show that it *ought not* to have done so ; as the Memphian physician in Zadig wrote a book to prove that his eye *ought* not to have got well ; but I was perfectly content with the fact, whatever its *morale*. Whether the happiness continued or not the next day, when all behaviours, looks, words, and deeds were reviewed and examined, I did not venture to inquire.

SECTION XIV.

A MAN OF FASHION IN THE COUNTRY.

“Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this Fashion is? How giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-twenty?”

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

ONE character I met with unexpectedly at the ball, which I had indeed often contemplated before, and generally with surprise. Nor was it lessened upon the present occasion, when I beheld in close attendance upon Lady Grandborough's party, my old acquaintance William Fawknor. This was a man whom I always thought was made for better things, though he chose not to think so himself. He was a person indeed of merit, though of much higher degree in his own opinion, and perhaps in that of others, than his family, or original position in the world, whatever his aspirations, warranted him to expect. He had abilities; much polish; was imbued with literature enough to elevate him above commonplace; and tact enough to know where and when to display it to best advantage. His manners were soft and insinuating to his superiors;

distant and high, and perhaps bordering upon dandyism, among his equals;—which was not at all the worse for his great and almost only object—high society. The highest and best that London could supply, was not too good for him. To do him justice, it was not mere title, nor the amplest wealth, if attended with vulgarity, that attracted him; but fashion, reputation, celebrity, refined luxury, and elegance. These were the deities of his idolatry.

As I lived much with him in London, and was even in his confidence, I knew him, if not well, at least as well as one London idler knows another; and having witnessed many of his attainments, and what I thought his powers of mind when drawn out by accident (for nothing else could do it), I have been perfectly astonished to see how he could throw them all aside, considered as means of happiness, in order to pursue the bubble reputation, not as a leader of soldiers in the field, but of exclusives in a drawing-room. Whether the particular zest of this consisted in his having accomplished it with such slender natural means—being in effect one of a family scarcely ranking with gentlemen, and having little but a very moderate fortune; or whether there is in us a natural propensity, like other ruling passions, to prefer being eminent for what is called fashion, to the distinc-

tions of arts or arms, learning or eloquence ; certain it is, that Fawknor, not without merit, and having, from a certain quiet reserve of manners, been selected for his friend at College, by a nobleman of the first rank, suffered himself willingly to be transplanted into a soil where he originally had little business, but where he took root and flourished luxuriantly in appearance, though with little or no fruit.

With the fair though not imposing talents I have mentioned, he was to his country and his family absolutely lost. His original design of pursuing the bar, which just lasted long enough to make it too late to pursue the army, was given up without trial ; his small capital was sunk, in order to enlarge his small income, so as to defray the expense (and barely so) of the life he had chosen.

To be the Duke of ——'s friend (he would have shuddered to be called his hanger on) contented his warmest ambition ; because through it he enjoyed the gratifying privilege annexed to it (richer than gold,) of moving in the first circles. It was thus, and without blemish, except as to his total uselessness, that he passed, or lost the best ten years of life.

Had it not therefore been for the party he was in, a county ball was the last place in which I could have expected to meet him ; but the footing

he was upon with the two noble families who headed the room, and the exclusive familiarity in which they indulged him, explained it at once. He had, in fact, accepted the invitation of Lady Grandborough, seconded by Lady Wilhelmina, to come down to help them to, what they called, satisfy the rustics, and *faire l'aimable* with themselves; and as he had no county influence, this was equally agreeable to the Drelincourts, who rejoiced at meeting one of their own clique.

Hence he was most exceedingly admired by the country *beau monde*, and though long past thirty, was estimated by all the ladies as not above five-and-twenty. He was, however, dead to all the inquiries which were made about him, and even the panegyrics upon his appearance, and the exclamations which he everywhere heard of—"quite the man of fashion!"—"most exceedingly geenteel," et cætera, et cætera.

When I complimented him upon this, his smile of contempt was amusing; and as I did not come with either the Grandboroughs or the Drelincourts, he wondered, with a tone of fastidiousness, what the devil could have brought me there?

When I told him I was always glad to witness people's happiness in whatever rank or class, and that I saw a great deal of it here, his affected shrug of amazement prompted a laugh which did not

seem to gratify him, but which I could not control. He told me, however, that he had heard from Etheredge in town something of a strange design I had, of making a tour, I did not know where, and with objects I did not know what; and he only hoped I would publish my adventures; which he had also heard from Etheredge had been very successful in regard to country 'Squires, strollers, and other new characters. "I suppose," said he, "you have already slept in a barn, or dined with a gipsy under a hedge. I heard of you too at Oxford, where it was thought your monkish tastes would have induced you to take the cowl, as affording the very epitome of happiness."

I took his raillery in good part, and told him it would do him a great deal of good if he joined my expedition; for I was sorry to think how much promise, in his instance, had evaporated in a round of occupations, on which he was thrown away. I did this to pique him, if I could, into something more active and less monotonous than the life he was leading; and I so far succeeded, that he looked a little serious, and owned to me, as between friends, that he was somewhat tired of the *pavé*, with all its charms. "They begin," he said, "like those of a faded beauty, who has outstood her calculations, to want a little furbishing, or at least to

assume some change of character, to be as interesting as they have been.

“ In this light,” said I, “ perhaps the barn or gipsy hedge might answer.”

He shook his head, and looking more anxious I thought than ever I had seen him, asked what possible attraction any one person we now saw could show, to induce a man accustomed to proper society to give one hour to their’s.

“ It is barely sufferable,” he said, “ supported by our brilliant friends ; but without whom, no man of any *monde* could ever mix in such a scene.”

When I told him that I had found that almost every character and situation furnished interest to an observer (some, very *great* interest), and that some had inspired me with even liking and esteem, and bore a comparison with the best subjects in London, he made a face ; and the Grandborough party beckoning him to go, he said he really gave me joy of a pursuit which would add so much to my fame as a man of fashion ; then giving me his finger, and his arm to Lady Grandborough, who seemed to have appropriated him to herself, he wished me good night ; —whispering, however, that probably he would see me in the morning.

SECTION XV.

“ The art of the Court

As hard to leave as keep : whose top to climb
Is certain falling ; or so slippery
That the fear's as bad.”

CYMBELINE.

THE next morning I did not know whether to expect Fawknor or not ; but it seems he really wished to renew our conversation of the night before, on the objects and nature of my tour ; and though intrenched to the teeth in finery, still a gleam of something like his original mental tastes had now and then come over him, with a sort of tacit reproach, he said, at the idleness of his life. I found, however, that the reproach was at least of a mixed nature ; for though he did not confess it, it was easy to see much was on his mind, and even that he felt more straightened in his circumstances than when he first set out. What was ten thousand times worse, he seemed not so firm as he had been in the empire of *bon ton*. Many of his most leading associates had either abdicated their thrones, of their own accord, for more domestic

occupations and interests, or for politics ; or were afraid of being forced, like himself, to resign in favour of younger, more active, or more gifted candidates for the lead. They, therefore, some of them, made long tours abroad, like great actors sometimes, who, fearing they may have tired the town, seek renovation and freshness from absence. Others, feeling themselves really too old to struggle, had been fain to put up with a second rank, and had fairly retired from power.

This of course more or less affected many who had only moved in their orbits, and who, like my friend, having little from their own position or connexions to support them, trembled to think of the change which the loss of their allies might inflict. This Fawknor had too much tact not to see, and he began to be a little uncomfortable from the reflection. He was even bordering upon the horror of being looked upon as a *çi-devant jeune homme* ; the possibility of which, when he commenced his career, never entered his contemplation.

All this I gathered in the rather long interview I had with him. He did not, indeed, in terms reveal it, much less consult me about it. He was even palpably anxious not to allow me, if he could help it, to discover the real melancholy of his position. But vain is the effort to disguise vanity. Under every aspect he could make the case

assume, I saw, and saw soon, that his, perhaps, real contempt for the company he had condescended to mix with the preceding night, was anything but the indication of a mind satisfied with itself. What he did confess showed much regret at his early mistakes, in being seduced by the dazzle of a life to which he was not born, and for which, in truth, he was not by nature intended. He actually wished he had embraced a profession : an amazing concession, and indicating a volume as to his real position.

But the law, he said, was vulgarly filled, and the inns of court too unfashionably situated. The Church gave him no prospect but that of a country living, or, at best, a prebend in a provincial town. Physic was out of the question ; commerce still more so ; for the army he was too late ; and office was too precarious. He was fond of letters, and wrote sentimental verses ; but the constellation of genius that has so dazzled our modern experience, was too overpowering to give him much hope of shining as a poet ; and, while he was more industrious in visiting the *boudoirs* of reigning ladies than the libraries of scholars, he could derive no substantial benefit, nor even reputation, from exertions in prose. It was thought he might have married richly ; but he wished to marry highly, too ; and

while wives were limited to one in number, he could not do both.

A Miss B. would have had him, but being only a rich contractor's daughter, he would not have *her*. He was one of those, indeed, who wished to have the Lady Laura (already honourably mentioned); but she, from his want of wealth, would not have *him*.

All these not little mortifications and disappointments I collected either directly, or by inference, from this memorable conversation; and I drew my own conclusions from it; certainly not favourable ones to the chances of happiness to that man who, in the plenitude of hope and the confidence of youth, repudiates the beaten tracks of the world, in order to follow a meteor, which may dazzle for a moment, but infallibly, in the end, leaves him in the mire.

Having obtained thus much from himself, it may perhaps be convenient, in order not to revert to it again, to continue the story to its melancholy end.

His reduced finances compelled him to open himself to his friend, (he never allowed him to be a patron,) the Duke, whose friendship, however, was on the wane. By his interest he obtained the offer of a small place of 400*l.* a-year. But this

requiring daily attendance in the city all the year round, it was rejected with indignation, and almost with scorn. Expostulations followed; the Duke was angry, reproached him with imprudence, and this kindling his natural courage into resentful expressions, the quarrel ended, as all quarrels between unequals do—the weakest went to the wall. The noble Duke, confiding in his power, told him he had never known his place; which was the unkindest cut of all. From that hour this victim of false and foolish ambition never held up his head; but finding his whole reign over, and that, if he did not voluntarily retire, he would be driven forcibly from his position, his spirit, (pity it was not better directed,) could not brook it; and sad to say, he ended his life by a voluntary death.

His affecting picture of himself in the moment of contemplating this agonizing catastrophe, I shall have occasion to mention hereafter; at present I proceed with the tour, on which, for a day or two, I had him for a companion. It did not last longer, and our very first *rencontre* showed how little he was fitted to extract interest from common accidents, and made me think of the loss of both Willoughby and Blythfield with greater regret.

SECTION XVI.

A VILLAGE PHILOSOPHER.

“ O ! this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a babe,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk.”

CYMBELINE.

Not far from Marlborough we were joined by a ruddy-faced man, in what is called good case. He had a good corporation; wore a good coat, good hat, and good boots; carried a whip, the handle of which was embossed with silver; and altogether had an air of plenty and contented importance, which denoted happiness,—the object of my search. He saluted us, which was of course returned; but, to Fawknor’s evident horror, he began to be eloquent upon the weather, the price of corn, and of flannel; the Game and Poor Laws; and various other usual and legitimate subjects which bring people together when jogging on the

same high-road, without the necessity of introduction.

Poor Fawknor could not conceal his annoyance ; which was not lessened by perceiving that I was rather disposed to encourage than check the intrusion ; and he entreated me in French to get rid of our companion, *coûte qui coûte*. But we had to do with a stout yeoman, who would not so easily be evaded ; and who, moreover, had a curiosity, seeing our grooms and portmanteaus, to know who we were, whither bound, and where from.

His first questions were to Fawknor, from whose predetermined silence he could extract nothing ; so he betook himself to me.

“ Fine doings last night, Sir, at the ball ! ”

“ Yes ! were you there ? ”

“ No ; but I allowed my daughter to go with a cousin of her’s, who lives in the town, and she gave me a comical account.”

“ I should like to know what,” said I, which made Fawknor look moody.

“ Why, she said there were two or three great families that rather spoilt it at first, for that the small ones did not know how to proceed—no how—till they all got jumbled together ; and then it did pretty well ; but that it would have been better if they had been all great, or all little. To which,” says I, “ there you are right, my girl ;

for it's always awkward and unlucky when people whether high or low, don't know, or don't keep to their places."

"That shows a great deal of observation on your part," said I.

"Why, I thank God," replied he, "I can look as far into a millstone as another; and I can generally find out who are content, and who not, with what they are about."

"I am glad to think," said I, "from your appearance, that you are one of the contented."

"I have no reason to be otherwise," returned he; "the world has gone pretty well with me, and I pretty well with the world; and I generally find, that where people are discontented with their lot, it is pretty much their own fault—they are either too high or too low for their callings."

"Good, again," said I, "and I suppose you have practical proof of it."

"Why, there is our rector," he returned ("you will pass through the parish about a mile farther"); he is very good, and learned, and I believe deserves a much better living, or a deanery, and, indeed, is already a king's chaplain; but all this makes him, I fear, above our poor place. Then on t'other side, he has got a poor curate, very good, too, in his way, but, I think, not good enough to be a teacher and a preacher. In short,

though humility is a fine thing, particularly in a clergyman, I don't like to see a divine hale-fellow-well-met with the driver of a dung-cart, or higler, and going about as shabby and dirty as they; a thing, indeed, God help them! which they cannot prevent, but he can."

"All this is very true," I observed, "and no doubt your village profits by your good sense. I wish all gentlemen who reside in the country were like you."

"I am no gentleman," replied he, bowing, however, at the compliment, which, for the first time, produced something like interest in my companion; and, as I looked surprised, our new acquaintance went on: "No! I will not pretend to be what I am not. That would contradict all my maxims I have just laid down. No! I am no gentleman, but, as I am classed in the jury summonses, a yeoman,—being, in fact, a farmer, and, thank God, well to do; and Dr. Courtown, our rector, is not above consulting me on all parish business, and sometimes of things higher than that."

"Politics, I suppose," said I, "as all the world are now politicians."

"You have hit it, Sir."

"And what may be your's and the Doctor's?" I asked.

“ Why, pretty much what we have been talking of: every man in his place, and then no danger of being tumbled down, but all in order. I have often proved this of an evening, at the Fighting Cocks, where we have sometimes a friendly meeting,—by asking my brother-farmers what we should do if every ploughman was to be master, or angry that he was not so.”

“ That, I suppose, was admitted by all?”

“ Not quite,” returned he; “for when the curate is there, he has a strange, wild notion, that all should take it in turn, and be sometimes master, sometimes servant.”

“ And no doubt,” added I, “ sometimes rectors, sometimes curates.”

“ Wits jump,” observed my companion, with some glee, “for that’s precisely what I tell him; and then I get a laugh against him, but no animosity.”

“ You seem,” said I, “to be very happy in your village. Your neighbours and yourself, and what you recount, are better than many ambitious scenes in higher life.”

“ Yet I own,” said he, “I am not without ambition; only it’s in my own way, and within my own compass: if I went out of that, I should perhaps be, and deserve it too, one of the discontented. But I had a wise father, God rest him,

though not a rich one; and when I was a mere lad he gave me a lesson about climbing above my reach, which I never forgot, though the cause of it was trumpery enough. But it made me observe, that wise people can draw instruction out of almost nothing."

"May we not know your lesson?" said I.

"It will, perhaps, not amuse you," returned he; "but it was this: I had been used to wear a snug, flat cap, with which I could run in and out of our low door without stopping or stooping. All of a sudden I took to want a high-crowned hat, for no other reason than that the 'Squire's steward's son, about my own age, had one. My father objected, because he said I was not used to it, and it would not suit me in my work. I got it, however, and the very first day I wore it, running as usual, quick through the door-way, I encountered a cross-beam, which gave me a sad knock on the head, split my hat in two, and laid me senseless on the ground. 'There, Dick,' said my father, when I came to myself, 'did I not tell you that a high crown, to one not used to it, was always an evil?' The blow on my head was soon forgotten, but my father's observation, never. Still I think ambition not a bad thing, if we are not like the frog in the fable, and do not long for things out of our reach."

“ And pray,” asked I, “ may I know the nature of your ambition ?”

“ No objection,” returned he. “ You see, barring the rector, and I think I ought to say the curate, seeing that he is in holy orders, though I feel equal to him in argument, and far better off as to the world: I am, I may say, at the top of the parish.”

“ Is there no 'Squire ?”

“ Yes; but he scarcely ever comes near us—never to the Fighting Cocks. Now, there, though I do not push for it, they all seem to think I ought to be the first (indeed, I pay far the largest rent of all); and no one will take the great leather arm-chair in the room behind the bar, till they know whether I am coming or not; and this I know they do, because I do not pretend to it as my right; and whenever the Rev. Mr. Codling the curate comes, I give it up to him, though I may have been seated half an hour. This I do according to my maxim I have mentioned, of every one to his place, and not beyond it.”

“ But should the 'Squire chance to come?” said I.

“ He would be immediately put in the chair, and we glad to do it, but there is no chance of it at all.”

“ Why ?”

“ His Lady says it is vulgar ; and yet even she might be the better for knowing how to keep her place.”

“ Pray who was she ?”

“ The daughter of old Grains the brewer, at Marlborough ; as good a man as ever stepped. But though the match was thought great for her, and at first she was very contented, yet ever since Lady Grandborough has visited her, they say she has been unhappy ; for though she turned off all her old tradesmen at Marlborough, and had every thing from London, she says Felix Hall can never be like Grandborough. Now, I may as well be unhappy too, because my farm at Ravenscroft cannot be like Felix Hall.”

“ Lady Grandborough, then, visits Felix Hall ?”

“ Why, yes ; once in two or three years, just before election time ; for you see, our 'Squire always supports my Lord's friend.”

“ Upon my word,” said I, “ I wish many great people, or those who think themselves so, would take the lesson you give ; for which I for one am greatly obliged to you. But may we not know who it is (we had now come to the village) that has made the last mile so pleasant ?”

“ Farmer Bigg,” said he, “ at your service,” and he touched his hat ; then turning in at a gate which led through a lane to a cheerful farm-house,

he thanked us for letting him keep company so far, and soon disappeared.

“ This is the best lesson I have heard for a long while,” said I to poor Fawknor, on whom, though he had not opened his lips, it was by no means thrown away. I saw it in many turns of his countenance, though he did what he could to disguise it, and was rather annoyed at my reiterated praise of the observing yeoman’s good sense; and when I pushed the matter with him, he said with some spleen, that he did not think I could be so taken with mere commonplace, and that I reminded him of what Ben Jonson once said of a farmer who had been sharp upon him, that he had never been so pricked by a hob-nail before. Nevertheless, I could plainly perceive that farmer Bigg’s sermon had had some effect upon my friend,—who from having been chatty and disposed to be amused before we met him, fell into musing, which, hoping it might possibly give a turn to his sickly mind, was careful not to disturb.

SECTION XVII.

“ Gods ! what lies I have heard,
Our courtiers say all’s savage but at court ;
Experience, O ! thou disprov’st report.”

CYMBELINE.

A FEW miles’ ride prepared him better for our visit to Blythfield, whom I had apprized of our intention the day before, and in sight of whose house we were now arrived. It was situated, as he had described, very near the road ; which Fawknor declared was a solecism in good taste ; quite agreeing with Lady Grandborough, that it was an absolute vulgarity.

“ But from your account,” added he, “ he must be a man of general low tastes ; and with his connexions and pretensions to mix with high and elegant society, to bury himself like a hog in his straw, I should think he was as unwilling as unable to enjoy anything better. With submission indeed, I should guess he was one of that nu-

merous tribe of enviers of the higher orders, who affect to neglect, because they are not noticed by them."

"He gave me no such idea," said I; "and do not let us judge him without trial. His undoubted birth and original breeding gives him the fullest right to be enrolled in the ranks of fashion, if he please."

"We shall see," said Fawknor, and we dismounted at the house-door. This was really what I have called it—a door, for it was not a gateway, nor was there a court-yard. It opened almost at once upon a public walk of limes and sycamores, from which it was only separated by a low paling. But the house had an ample range of many windows, showing good rooms commanding the walk, with gardens behind and at each end. This, and an immense brass knocker kept very bright, effectually did away the notion of a prouder lord-of-manoor mansion, in the midst of inclosures which hide it from the profane. I saw Fawknor's thought of it, by the toss of his chin when he alighted. We were conducted, however, through a tolerably spacious hall, into a long drawing-room, set out with old fashioned, high-backed, but well-stuffed chairs, covered with needle-work of very bright worsted, at least a century old. It was lined with an ample white wainscot, which might have looked cold, but

that it was clothed all over with most respectable family pictures ; for, as I have said, Blythfield was of no mean descent. At the upper end was one by Sir Joshua, purporting to be the Lady Matilda Blythfield, daughter of the Earl of Grandborough, 1770. This was Blythfield's mother ; and her lace lappets, ruffles, and cloak, with many diamonds and rubies on her fingers, gave an additional lustre to the richness of the colouring. It altogether bespoke a portrait of nobility. As we went further back in point of time, other Grandboroughs and many Blythfields challenged our notice ; the dresses changing with the age, till we got from the velvet coats and swords of Hudson, through the flowing draperies of Sir Godfrey, to the mantles, close vests, and ruffs, and wide-mouthed, untanned boots of Vandyck.

" There is something in this," said I to my companion, as we were left alone till the master should appear.

" Certainly not so Hottentot as I imagined," answered he : " it *is* something to be so well descended ;" and I thought he gave a sort of sigh as he said this. " It only, however, moves one's wonder, that a man of such family, and so presentable everywhere, should shut himself up in such a place, and take to such a way of life as this."

“Come,” said I, “the place is no such bad place; and, as to the life, let every man judge for himself. It would be hard if no man could be happy out of a drawing-room, or nowhere but at Windsor or St. James’s.”

“It would so,” returned he, crossing his arms with a significant motion of his head; but further discussion was interrupted by the entrance of the master, who welcomed us to Welbourne.

Immediately, however, pulling out his watch, he observed, that we should have barely time to dress for dinner, “which,” said he, “old bachelor like, I never allow to wait for any body, not even for two gentlemen, who, I know, are the pink of the mode.”

“Both commonplace and ungracious this,” said Fawknor, “when we were shown to our rooms: “yet I suppose he prides himself on this bluntness, as he despises the pink of the mode.”

“Try him a little further,” said I, “before you condemn him.”

“This at least is not bad,” observed Fawknor, pointing to a really rich toilette covered with the finest japan and filigree plate, a superb mirror, and a bed of the richest crimson damask; “no doubt,” continued Fawknor, “not his own taste, but probably his mother’s; and she, you know, was a Grandborough.”

At these words I left him to dress with as little delay as possible; and, in effect, we got into the dining-room almost in company with the dinner itself. Our domestics were but two,—all, he said, that he could manage,—indeed, all that were necessary for so small a party. They were in blue coats, and long-flapped waistcoats, both trimmed with white and yellow livery lace, which gave them a most respectable and even rich appearance. We also ate off plate, and there were huge embossed tankards and waiters on the side-board, which had a costly effect, not at all lost upon Fawknor.

A venerable old Spaniard of a pointer had walked into the room with us, and took up his dignified rest (for such it was,) at his master's right hand—receiving what was now and then offered him with tranquil gravity, but not at all incommoding anybody with importunity.

“I allow this gentleman,” said Blythfield, “to be my companion, to teach me manners, in case I should forget them. You see he has all the dignity of his country; not at all the coxcombrity of a *petit maître* poodle, but, by nature as well as name, a Spanish Don.”

Fawknor, to be polite, said he believed he might have a worse companion; but unfortunately he added, “especially in a place so distant

from all resort of the good company you have been used to :”—and he wound up with a compliment, really meant, upon the resources he must have within himself, to guard against *ennui*.

“ Mr. Fawknor,” returned my landlord, “ I am obliged to you for what you no doubt intend as a civility ; I could expect no less from one of your breeding ; but, if you please, I will not accept of a compliment at the expense of my honest neighbours, who are all as good, and enjoy their lives quite as well as myself.”

As he said this in perfect good-humour, in order to draw him out a little, I observed, “ but you must allow with all this, that you live out of the world.”

“ How obscure is that word !” returned he ; “ and if we asked its real meaning, who would be found to agree in any particular definition of it ? There is the fashionable world, which, I suppose, is yours, but not mine ; there is the common world, which is mine, and not yours ; there is the political world, which is neither yours nor mine ; there is the sporting world, the musical, the commercial, the learned world, et cætera, et cætera. Now, though all these have inhabitants, none will allow that any but themselves live in *the* world. By the way, I wish our late companion Willoughby, whom we parted with at Marlborough, had come with you. I do love that fellow, and he would

give us some knowledge of what the world is; for, from his wandering life, no one has seen more of it."

"You," said I, rather amused, and looking through an immense window close to the road, "at least *see* a great deal of the world."

"Yes! all the stage-coaches, certainly," replied he, "and all other vehicles proceeding to and from Bath; though I am afraid (looking at Fawknor, who seemed to sit in silent resignation), this gentleman may think, with his friend Lady Grandborough, that is but vulgar amusement."

"I can think nothing vulgar," returned Fawknor, (looking round him at the family pictures with an air of somewhat stiff politeness), "in a gentleman so well descended."

"Why, yes!" replied our host, "a good descent is, in my creed, sometimes a good thing, especially as it gives one very little trouble. It is, in these equalizing days, rather rudely treated; but if it only kept one from shabby thoughts and shabby actions, I, for one, would ever uphold it. There," said he, turning to one of his kinsmen of the house of Douglas, an officer in a naval uniform, with a ship on fire in the back-ground, "what Douglas would prove recreant, if it were possible for any of that gallant name to think of being so, when he remembered his ancestor at Chatham, who, when

his ship was on fire, exclaimed, a ‘Douglas never was known to quit his post!’ and chose rather to be blown up, as you see, though he might have escaped.”

Fawknor could not help approving this unexpected remark ; for unexpected it was ; but he could not at the same time conceal a look of surprise, though checked by that repose of good breeding which proscribes all display of astonishment, let what will be the cause.

Blythfield, who, under his plain and rather blunt manner, possessed, as we have seen, a great deal of shrewdness, noticed this.

“What !” said he, “I suppose your and my friend Lady Grandborough, has told you that I am a bear, and a plebeian, because I wear this old-fashioned coat, and, like my old-fashioned life at Welbourne, better than hers at Grandborough. But I often tell her (and she does not like me the better for it), that I am the old courtier of the Queen, who, ‘like a wise man, keep myself within my own bounds ;’ she—

“A new fangled Lady that is dainty, nice, and spare,
Who never knew what belonged to good housekeeping or
care,
Whose new fashioned hall built where the old one stood,
Is hung with *new* pictures that do the poor no good,
And fine marble chimneys wherein burns neither coal nor
wood *.”

* Old and young Courtier.

This allusion to his misfortunes in his cold visit to Grandborough, so feelingly described a day or two before, amused me, and I accused him of bearing malice; to which he assented. But Fawknor thinking it right to defend his puissant ally, could not see how Lady Grandborough was to blame for living like other ladies of her quality; and that, for one, he must be permitted both to approve and admire her tastes.

“ My dear Sir,” replied Blythfield, eyeing him with something of caustic scrutiny, “ approve and admire her and her tastes as much as you please. Do not suppose that I *blame* my Lady cousin for the life she leads, or the manner in which she spends her husband’s money. If she choose to lie a-bed all day, instead of only till twelve o’clock; or, being herself a mushroom, resolve to visit nobody under the wife of a Knight of the Garter; or have twenty poodle dogs instead of one, for her companions; if that is her happiness, I cannot be so silly or so impertinent as to *blame* her. Only give me leave, in my turn, to live the life I like, and avoid what I dislike, though others may find hers a heaven.”

“ Certainly,” said Fawknor, looking a little disconcerted, but soon resuming his tone, “ every one has a right to his tastes, however they may differ,

and whether high or low ; the question is as to the nature of those tastes."

Here he stopped, thinking he had said enough.

" But with all possible deference to your refinement," returned Blythfield, " that can never *be* the question ; for no one can ever by *argument* fix a taste, or force a man to like or dislike any thing he is not inclined to like or dislike. All I contend for is the power of being a quiz, if I please, without being laughed at ; or, if I am, to have liberty to laugh in my turn at those I think greater quizzes than myself. The truth is, there can be no superiority of one man over another, in any thing, merely conventional, unless he belong to the same clique, and acknowledge the same laws, customs, and sovereigns. Lady Grandborough has, I know, said, that I like to live among blackguards ; and I, with as much reason, assert that her Ladyship likes to live among fools ; but I mean not by this, what I know not to be true, that all her Ladyship's friends are fools, or that all ladies of quality are Lady Grandboroughs."

" Both would be wrong," I observed, fearing a breach of the peace ; for I saw something like incipient contempt and indisposition kindling in Fawknor, and certainly no inclination in mine host to yield to his fine visitor.

We had now left the dining-room, and a well appointed, well painted Bath coach came rattling by, loaded inside and out, to its fullest capacity; but its four superb horses, their skins dazzling with sleekness and good grooming, made nothing of it, and it absolutely smoked along the road with very little exertion. They gave nothing but pleasure to the blooming coachman, and evidently delighted a dozen of jolly outsiders. Observing we were at the windows, coachey pulled off his hat with great reverence, which was returned by Blythfield with a (*sotto voce*, as if to himself,) "How are you, Matt.?" This was not unobserved by Fawknor, nor was the impression it made upon him lost upon Blythfield—who said to him, "I see all you think of me for this unseemly condescension,—which would banish me for ever from the Squares of London; but you would not, I am sure, cut an old friend."

Fawknor rather reddened at the surmise. "You do not, perhaps, know, that I too am a brother of the whip, and have sometimes driven that very coach, with that very Matt. for my instructor, who, therefore, salutes the house whenever he passes, whether I am at the window or not. You see, too, what a gay thing the whole is; how many happy faces were enjoying their jolly trip, in the buxom air, with pleasant fields on each side, to say nothing of those glorious animals who seemed themselves

to participate in the cheerfulness, and certainly, though so loaded, gave no sign of *ennui*."

"I never thought any body could be so eloquent," said I, "upon a stage-coach, and wonder less than ever at the sign I so frequently see, of the coach and horses; still less now, at your taste for a house so near the road. Yet I should think dust and noise might incommode you enough to make you sometimes wish for the retirement you so dislike in a park."

Fawknor observed he was just going to make the same remark.

"As to the dust," replied he, "you saw none just now; and if you will examine, you will find the whole road watered like a summer garden. Noise, indeed, is not always agreeable; yet that which indicates the cheerfulness of the heart,—those brats, for instance, now running home from their evening school,—I can manage to bear; nay, if I have been a long time alone, can find pleasure in it; but if not, it is only shifting my quarters to another room, where a garden and quiet are ready to greet me."

To this I replied, "You have studied the matter, I see, and I have no more to say; but it should seem from your own account, that company now and then is a treat."

"You are perfectly right," he replied; "and

the pleasure yours give me, at this moment, proves it."

This was so well timed, and accompanied with an air so naturally easy, that Fawknor himself was struck with it, and began to give Blythfield credit for something like innate, though not acquired, suavity of manners.

"Thanking you for your politeness," said I, "this visit of ours, you know, was merely accidental; and I should fear, with all your taste for simple life and manners, a companion of your own calibre would only do good. I should be glad to know your secret to pass whole days without suitable conversation."

"My secret is very simple," he replied; "for, exclusive of books, I am never at fault for want of company to converse with. I converse with myself, and have often enough, and too much of my subject. I have a thousand evils, and ten thousand weaknesses and imperfections, to probe, sift, understand, and, if possible, correct. Things that one cannot detect in a crowd, strike us forcibly when alone; there is then no diversion from truth, no drawing off of the witnesses against one's self, no disguise, because no necessity for one; but all naked, unsophisticated reality, cited to, and examined at, the bar of conscience. If to know our-

selves, therefore, be the first precept, to be *alone* in order to do so, is the second."

Both Fawknor and myself were struck with the emphatic and rather raised manner in which he uttered these words, and we both mentally asked the same question — can this be Lady Grandborough's vulgar relation ?

"There is a pleasure, however," continued he, "to those accustomed to be alone, not easy to be understood by those who are not, and of which we ourselves are only most sensible when we are interrupted : I mean, when we feel that we are monarchs of all we survey, and have no rivals near the throne, though the throne be only the fireside or the arm-chair. To feel that we may roam at pleasure from one room to another, or up and down the same room, without annoying or being annoyed by anybody ; that we may indulge whatever train of thought we please, and even give liberty to that thought by talking to one's self, if one likes it ; and all this secure from what infallibly breaks the enchantment—the mere eye, much more the tongue of an intruder, even though a friend. This, I say, is more real enjoyment, though under a fancied monotony, than many a devotee of company is able to conceive. But when you have had your fill of all this, and wander out of doors

for a change, every step you take, every breath you breathe, and every face you meet, is fraught with something of pleasantness, which those who live always in a crowd are doomed never to taste."

"Well described," said I; "but these are your mornings. You dine early, and I should fear your evenings hung heavy."

"They pass quicker than the rest of the day," said he, "though I can scarcely to myself tell how. Certainly they pass more imperceptibly than under the restraints of company;—which, let them, or the dinner, be ever so good, I have always wished at an end, and looked often at the clock, long before the wished-for relief of the carriages has come."

"This seems perfectly savage," said I; and I looked at Fawknor, who seemed perfectly to agree with me; but Blythfield only laughed at our surprise. When I intreated him, however, to finish the description of his day, he said, "Faith, I am almost ashamed; not because I fear being laughed at, but because I have no right to the selfish but delightful indulgences which the total abstraction from the restraints of the world confer upon one that can suffice to himself."

"For heaven's sake let us hear these indulgences!"

"You will be disappointed," said he; "there

can be no want of companions while there are books."

"After dinner, then, is your time for study: and what are your subjects?"

"Almost always the world. I never could dive into the abstruser sciences; as Gray once said, 'I am not a metaphysician, and have not the eyes of a cat, to see in the dark; nor a mathematician, with those of an eagle, to see in too much light. But the world! men! manners! human nature! These charm me in all descriptions of them, of which, thank Heaven, excellent, just, witty, amusing, instructive, there is no want. With these for my associates, I can want no conversation to give zest to my wine after dinner.'"

"But your authors! We shall get at your tastes and objects by them. I suppose Hume, and Adam Smith, and Montaigne, or La Bruyère; perhaps the Spectator!"

"Nothing so didactic. That would be preaching over one's liquor, which is not to my taste; but *Le Sage* and your namesake are held by me in the highest honour; to say nothing of *Humphrey Clinker*, or some other such book (if any such can be found of equal fidelity and humour). This, though ever so solitary, transports me back into the world, without the trouble of being in it; it

makes me laugh aloud, though by myself; and I should be glad to know of you gentlemen of that world, how many men there are in it, besides yourselves, that could prove half such entertaining companions."

This was a hit we could not parry; so I asked what other authors he had besides.

"There is Sir Walter," returned he.

"The best of all," I observed. "I see you want no company; I only fear we are in the way: but pray go on with the account."

"I have little more to tell," said he. "I call for coffee; perhaps I compose an essay—a bad one, I grant you, but as nobody sees it, no matter; perhaps I compose myself to sleep,—to which I sometimes am invited by neither more nor less than the rhythm of that high clock, whose pendulum has given me many a doze; for its lulling witchery (as I may call it,) has often soothed me like the lullaby of a child, and made my sleep almost as sweet. But of this, I see by your laughing, you are unworthy; and, indeed, I am not surprised at it;—for I must tell you, if you have not yet discovered it, that these day-sleeps can only be really enjoyed by those who have no cares or hankerings after the world; and, above all, who have nothing on their consciences—no quarrel with themselves."

I almost felt reproved by this serious ending of

the philosopher of ease, who certainly knew very well how to cure our disposition to laugh at him, if we had it. I entreated him, therefore, to go on.

“ Well,” said he, “ I rise refreshed for a walk, which only ends with twilight ; and with none but my thoughts for my companions ; which, if I find them worth recording, I commit to paper : and so to bed.”

Both Fawknor and myself bowed our thanks ; and for once, I said, I should be among his enviers ; though I feared I should not be believed in Mayfair, if I told what I sincerely thought of his way of life.

The evening closed in, after a walk in a very odoriferous and prolific garden, which surrounded three parts of the house ; and as Fawknor was to start early in the morning to rejoin the Grandborough party, Blythfield said it would be good for his health if, for once, he went to bed at eleven o'clock.

His butler then appearing with a pair of massive candlesticks and bougies, preceding our steps, our host himself conducted us to our rooms, as he said his father and grandfather had always made a rule of doing when distinguished strangers did him the honour to visit him. He then took leave of Fawknor, thanking him for the favour he had conferred upon him, with an air, and in a tone of self-possession, amounting almost to dignity ; which

evidently gave my companion something like surprise.

Left alone with him previous to my retiring, "I wonder," said I, "what your report will be to the Grandboroughs of their cousin: I should like to know."

"It is difficult to say," returned he, "for I know it not myself. There seem so many contrasts in the man, of bluntness and ceremony; of excellent feeling and abrupt chiding; of almost dignity and almost vulgarity; that I shall be puzzled what to say. I am inclined to feel with Lady Grandborough about him, yet cannot fairly oppose her husband's opinion, which is all in his favour."

"I own," said I, "that though he may be plain, I see nothing ill-bred or vulgar in him; but, on the contrary, something that betokens the consciousness of being a man of quality, though of the old school, and not of town-breed. Perhaps, too, I may with him reject Lady Grandborough as a judge; as I would all ladies not born to their rank. At any rate you will allow that he has sense and observation, and seems perfectly happy."

"As happy," returned Fawknor, "as a man with such exceedingly mediocre tastes can perhaps be. But to what does that amount?"

"You could not, then, be as happy yourself in the same situation?"

“ Certainly not,” said he, with some disdain at my question, “ nor any other man of any consequence whatever.”

“ Excuse me,” said I, “ if I think that there is a certain degree of fashion even about *him*. Not that *that* constitutes the happiness he enjoys.”

“ Fashion !” exclaimed Fawknor, “ ridiculous !”

“ He is well born !”

“ So much the worse.”

“ There is a sort of grandeur in his living !”

“ So there is in the lord mayor’s.”

“ My good friend, I wish you were a Duke, and never out of Grosvenor Square.”

“ I wish so, too,” said he ; and with this we wished one another good night.

Alas ! I never saw poor Fawknor more !

SECTION XVIII.

“Weigh what convenience, both of time and means,
May fit us to our shape.”

HAMLET.

THE next morning I found my new friend, whose ways and humour had begun to interest me more and more, in his woollen gown and thick slippers, traversing a better sort of *basse cour*, set round with the neatest offices. He had a basket in his hand, which was no sooner perceived by at least a hundred fowls, and as many pigeons from an old-fashioned dovecot, than they beset him, not in vain, for the contents of his basket. It was soon emptied; and the contests, sometimes long and bloody, sometimes momentary, to obtain the corn, gave him, he said, an excellent illustration of the right of the strongest.

As he saw me rather surprised, both at his appearance and employment—“It is my amusement,” said he, “and though a tame one, not without its interest. You see I have the true

Dorking breed, and am not a little envied for my success. I know I have been quizzed for this behind my back, by the dear Grandboroughs ; but I tell them it is all envy ; at which my Lady sets up her toss of contempt, (totally forgetting the butler and coach-horse of Lady Teazel,) and is angry with her Lord for only laughing when I call these pleasures of mine natural, theirs artificial. This is generally," added he, " my first employment in the morning, except one ; and hoping for your assistance at that, I deferred it ; but, remember, I press nobody into the service."

By this I understood him to mean prayers, and I of course assented. The congregation was merely the household ;—very orderly and serious, and plainly dressed ; save the housekeeper, a good lady, who, as there was company, had put on a silk gown for the honour of the house : for which, as Blythfield told me, he afterwards rated her well. The two men who had had on their state-liveries the day before, now appeared in thickset frock-coats and waistcoats ; and the upper one enacted the part of clerk most sonorously.

We none of us, I believe, ate the worse breakfast for these our devotions ; and being new to it, it impressed me a good deal, if only with a view to the content it seemed to diffuse over the whole *ménage*, which I noted as a happy one.

I would have left Blythfield after breakfast, but he so pressed me to stay another day, that I complied.

“ I have not half initiated you,” said he, “ into the mysteries of this new life ; for new it must be to you. And, besides, I have hopes of you ; which is more than I can say of your fine companion, who, I suppose, only came to spy out the nakedness of the land, and is at this moment, no doubt, paying his court to my lady cousin, by describing the Arcturus he has seen. I observed his horror at finding my house elbowed by neighbours, instead of rearing itself, like Grandborough, in the magnificent solitude of a park. Now to me, this vicinity to others is what recommends it. I do not want to be out of the world because I live in the country. If my neighbours are respectable, and exhibit neatness, cheerfulness, and ease in their dwellings, it does not annoy, it rather adds to my content, to see theirs. In this we but follow the foundation of all true taste, Nature,—who certainly never meant us for solitary animals, like beasts of prey. My grandeur, therefore, is not at all diminished because I have other fellow-creatures besides servants within ken. And yet, after all, you see they are not so close as to interrupt or overlook us in the smallest degree ; my garden is as sacred as if it were a hundred miles off. To be sure I see

other chimneys smoking besides my own ; and as the evening advances, I see light after light illuminating my neighbours' houses ; every one indicating that there are friends and inhabitants at hand ; which is, at least, a comfortable idea."

I agreed to this, and reminded him, not without a cordial assent, that every poet and landscape gardener, the most fastidious, had always enumerated this among the features of taste.

"Why, say what we will," replied he, "as we are men, all signs of habitation by our fellow-men must be pleasing. Even, on the score of protection alone, (though I am not much afraid in these days,) I prefer," said he, "the proximity of neighbours, to a desert ;—which I call all places, however beautiful, where there are none. In former days every lone house was obliged to be a castle, to save throats from being cut. In these times that is not necessary ; but we know the empire which imagination holds over reason, and we are delighted sometimes with just so much idea of danger as may make us feel pleasure in *thinking* we are safe. Now, where there are neighbours, this is our case ; where none, we cannot always prevent the thought, at least of helplessness, from intruding ; and this is seated so deep in the very frame of our minds, that it forms a principal ingre-

dient in the philosophy of agreeable or disagreeable sensations."

"I allow this," said I, "for when I have traversed a vast heath, with no inhabitants but those of a solitary hovel or two, I have felt refreshed, I had almost said comforted, by a sudden approach to a hamlet, ever so small; and if a single house, as it sometimes does, has uplifted itself to the eye, I have blessed myself that I was not born to live in it. Still," I told him, "I feared that while the theory appeared good, the practice condemned it; for all were fond of burying themselves in seclusion. Even the citizen in his box is never satisfied till he has planted and palisaded himself from the eye of the passing world."

"That is," returned he, "because the citizen at the two-mile-stone has too much of a good thing. Were he quite out of the world, or only as we are here, he would not do so. Barring these exceptions, I think your theory and practice are in general reversed; for do we not see the owners of the most magnificent seclusions become mere birds of passage, instead of attached inhabitants? Are they not forced to call in the aid of powerful reinforcements of visitors? Or if they cannot procure these, do they not fly to watering-places for relief? I, who never liked living in a crowd, could neither bear that, nor its contrast—solitude. I therefore,

after some years' trial, let a fine but lonely family mansion, (for which I was thought a curmudgeon by the good-natured world,) and settled myself here, where I enjoy my life, such as it is, far more to my satisfaction."

"But the sameness," observed I, "of looking always upon the same buildings."

"Is not worse," said he, "than looking always upon the same trees."

"Yet the trees, though but wood and foliage, are full of animation, and tell of the wonders of creation!"

"Ay! but they are not flesh and blood, and tell nothing of human nature. To be sure the trees seem animated with a soul; but it is *really* so with houses, where inhabitants make them actually alive. You will scarcely believe that, from often eyeing them in different lights, according to the hours, I feel as if they were my personal friends; they have even a physiognomy with which I can converse."

I found he was prepared at all points, and told him so; adding, that I was very willing to become his disciple, for everything about him seemed to have its *rationale*, and to breathe order and content. "What I like, too," said I, "is to see how perfectly compatible with the ease and dignity of birth and breeding, is an attention, silent, indeed, and un-

obvious, but efficacious, to the comforts of an ample though not immoderate establishment. I have observed order to reign in all your departments,—and all the better for it.”

“Why, that,” replied he, “I got at my cousin Grandborough’s, from observing the total want of it. My Lady, because she never had more than one footman till she married my Lord, will now never have less than six, all crowding together. The consequence is, that they are in one another’s way, and break one another’s shins. It is the same thing with everything else in their *ménage*; which sadly o’ersteps the modesty of taste: for taste is modest as well as grand, and mere expense will never give it its true character.”

I own I was more and more surprised at my host of the road-side, whom Fawknor thought it a disgrace to be ranked with. I looked my approbation, and he wound up by saying,—“In short, I learned this lesson from my rich and grand relations,—that if to feel interested about things is to be happy, to push them *à l’outrance* will not accomplish it; for where there is superfluity in everything, there can be interest in nothing. Were I a mathematician, I should say, that as the great beauty of that charming science, (for beauty it has,) is proportion, so proportion is as beautiful in moral as in geometrical investigation.”

“ You astonish me,” said I; “ and, I own, beat all my town philosophy, ‘ my dukedom to a beggarly denier.’ But I should like this more explained.”

“ What I mean,” he replied, “ is, that as proportion is one cause of beauty in physics, so it is in morals: and as the agreeableness, whether from grandeur or beauty, of a whole, (in architecture, for example,) depends upon the proportion of its parts to that whole, and to one another; so in morals, happiness will depend upon the accommodation of means to ends; upon consistency of conduct; and upon the avoidance of all disproportion in our way of living, whether from silly extravagance, or niggardly saving.”

“ Clearly explained,” said I.

“ I have a little corollary to add,” said he, “ but which you will anticipate. A man whose house, pleasures, or habits of living do not exceed, or do not greatly fall short of his means and station, feels increased pleasure from that very circumstance. I need not apply the contrary consequence to the contrary conduct. Hence, all fortunes, all situations, and even everything arising from education, are, in amount of happiness to the holders of them, pretty much alike. Everything depends upon your understanding your place, and being in it:—and this is what I call moral proportion.”

SECTION XIX.

A RECLUSE.

“ I'll give my jewels for a set of beads ;
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage ;
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown ;
My figured goblets for a dish of wood.”

RICHARD II.

I FELT the truth of all these observations of Blythfield, and not the less for their perspicuity, or for their coming from a quarter where I so little expected them. I only wished that he who had left us in the morning had come in for a share of the lecture.

“ By the way,” added Blythfield, whom I would wish now to call the philosopher of nature, rather than of ease, “ there is near us a practical example of content, arising out of the adaptation of means to ends, though at the expense of great privation, which I could wish you to contemplate.”

I asked of whom he spoke, and he said, “ Of a gentleman (for gentleman he is, though leading the life of a pauper,) who has much interested me,

both by the vicissitudes and reverses in his life, and the manner in which he bears, with a view to redeem them.

“This is my game,” said I. “Who can it be?”

“His name is Carleton,” returned Blythfield.

“Carleton! What, Carleton who outran himself in every excess; the greatest dandy; the greatest gourmand; the greatest jockey; the greatest philanderer: he who, to recover himself, staked everything he had left on the throw of a die, and lost it?”

“The same.”

“But how came he here?”

“It was said he debated whether he should shoot himself, or go to the West Indies; but as people who debate about it seldom shoot themselves, he chose the latter.”

“How then, and how long has he been here?”

“He is now in the fourth year of his exile,” replied Blythfield, “and in the successful pursuit of a laudable end, by laudable means; for which I honour him; and I am glad to say, that the moral *proportion* of his present position has been so well preserved, that he has, from a mortified and disappointed man, already become a happy one.”

“I am impatient to know more of his history,” said I.

“ If you are a friend,” replied Blythfield, “ he will perhaps give it you himself.”

“ No !” I said, “ I knew him in his dazzle and his splendour ; he will not like to be seen shorn of his beams.”

“ You do him injustice,” replied my host ; “ I have told you he is a pregnant instance of what knowledge of moral proportion can do. In short, his sense and fortitude in this respect elevate him far more than his penury depresses him in my estimation ; and the truth is, he is obviously happy, though deprived of everything like what others would call the means of happiness.”

“ There must be some temporary excitement here,” said I ; “ some enthusiasm which will leave him worse than it found him.”

“ It has lasted three years,” answered Blythfield.

“ And where is he to be found ?”

“ In a farm-house, under the high clumps of trees which you may see yonder, on the brow of that hill, though three miles off. He there boards with the farmer, who gives him a tolerable room, and brown bread and bacon, for twenty pounds a-year ; to which he adds thirty more for personal expenses ; among them tea and sugar, which he could not do without : though he has left off wine,

and is very angry with himself for not being able to dispense with that luxury also."

"I did not know he had this determination of character," said I. "His object, then, is—"

"To pay off an immense debt by instalments; to facilitate which he resolved at once, and bravely performed it, to spend shillings where he had before spent hundreds of pounds. The hope of this, he says, gives flavour to every brown morsel he eats, and makes water taste like wine."

"This is as interesting as decided," said I. "Shall we go to him?"

"Agreed."

Accordingly we ordered our horses, and took a romantic path through a hollow way, which conducted us to a defile bound in by opposing hills, and totally out of sight of Blythfield's mansion, or, indeed, of any indication of inhabitancy anywhere else. All was rough with rocks and furze, rising like walls, as if to bar egress, except by the way we entered. At the end was a torrent; it was one of those glens, abrupt, small, and not frequent, but which are sometimes to be met with in down countries, and reminded me of that pretty description in one of Wordsworth's poems:—

"The pastoral mountains front you face to face!
But courage! for beside that boisterous brook
The mountains have all open'd out themselves,

And made a hidden valley of their own.
No habitation there is seen ; but such
As journey hither find themselves alone
With a few sheep, with rocks, and stones, and kites,
That overhead are sailing in the sky*."

Certainly if a man, whether from being disappointed in the world, from religion, remorse, or any other cause, sought shelter in retirement, he could not have fallen upon a more appropriate spot. Having pushed through the channel of the brook,—not unromantic, from the furze on its banks now beginning to bloom,—the valley opened wider, assuming the character of meadows, in the midst of which a tolerable though antiquated farmhouse reared itself to our view.

" 'Tis there," said Blythfield, " that our friend, become the rigorous child of prudence, is endeavouring to atone for former excesses, and by banishment and privation, first to give every man his own, and then to restore himself to the world."

" We must all honour him for this," said I ; " but if his desire was to seclude himself, he could not have chosen better."

" At first," said Blythfield, " he owned he could not bear it ; it was just better, he said, than killing himself ; which the world, indeed, reported he had done. But now, and particularly as time lessens his pecuniary burthens, he has the luxury of hope

* Wordsworth's Michael.

to feed upon; and I have really often admired the animation as well as sense with which he has sometimes discussed his situation. ‘ If I do not succeed,’ he has said, ‘ it is no more than I deserve ; if I do, I may, perhaps, acquire the esteem of others, and, what is better, recover my own.’ ”

“ This is admirable,” said I ; “ but we probably see our object in *propriâ personâ*, if that be he who has just opened the garden gate.”

“ The same,” said Blythfield ; and we rode up to him, I, full of curiosity, mixed, from what I had heard, with no small portion of respect.

On perceiving a stranger, as he thought, in me, he rather slunk back ; but a sign from Blythfield stopped him. He reddened when he made me out, for he had only known me in his full career.

“ Yet why,” said he, recovering himself, as he advanced again, “ should I be ashamed of what I know nobody will blame, but those whose opinions nobody cares for ! You see me,” added he, “ very different from St. James’s Street, and anything but ashamed of being so, except for the cause.”

Different he was, indeed ; for I have ranked dandyism among his other excesses ; and he was now arrayed in almost Quaker simplicity, not so much from taste as cheapness. His coat, indeed, had little of the Quaker, for it was rather a close jacket of grey second, or, perhaps, third cloth ;

duffel trowsers, of the same lasting colour ; extremely thick shoes ; and a straw hat bought at Marlborough, for a shilling, a year before.

Guessing, perhaps, my reflections at the sight, " It is very true," he said, holding up his arm, " this is not Stultz ! but it is as warm, more durable, and, all associations considered, far more agreeable. It is not everybody I would wish to see me thus ; but if I know you at all, neither of us will repent it. You did not, however, I hope, mean to keep your saddles during your visit ; though I have little to tempt you to dismount ?"

I assured him it gave me great pleasure to see him again ; and we were off our horses in a moment. The little scintilla of shyness (it was no more) which had shaded his countenance, was now dissipated, and he had courage to talk of himself.

" Blythfield, I see, has brought you here," said he, " and I thank him for it. No doubt, too, he has fully explained the nature and object of my metamorphose ; the necessity for it, in common with the rest of the world, you must have long known."

I told him, what was true, that the metamorphose and its object had only raised my esteem for him ; though I owned I wondered at the strictness of his retirement, and the severe privations to which I had been told he submitted.

" Be assured," said he, " both were necessary ;

for I found I could not compromise with my situation. Having taken my resolution, I made over my whole estate to trustees, for the benefit of those who had a better right to it than myself, and I reserved but fifty pounds a year for subsistence. I had sinned grossly against every rule of prudence and propriety, and even decency of conduct ; and I felt how dearly I ought to pay for it. But this forced me, of course, to quit London. A great friend, indeed, procured me the offer of a place in the Household, with a salary six times what I now spend ; but not only I felt how out of my place I should be, humbled as I was, by my own folly, if I accepted it,—I really found I should be the poorer for it ; for it would not have paid for an embroidered coat. But further than this, if I remained in London, I knew I should be pointed at, and the epithets of fool, spendthrift, and madman, rang by anticipation in my ears. I had nothing left for it, therefore, but to fly, as I did ; and I have here found the obscurity which becomes me, and is essential to the plan which both honour and prudence command.

“ I have also further found how every thing is by comparison, and how equal all lots are, even in the eye of vanity, when passion and prejudice do not pervert us. In my best days, I could only be thought the equal of those whom I lived with, and

for whom, as it were, I ruined myself. I am here, even bereaved as I am, superior to my daily companions; but I have better consolation in the prospect of accomplishing the object I have in view."

The straw hat and duffel trowsers of Carleton became instantly the finest beaver and merino in my eyes, as he concluded this speech; and he crowned it by saying, that he was not only reconciled to his cage, but with the prospect before him, far happier than he ever had been when he revelled in thousands. Then pulling out a pocket Shakspeare, he added, "See what I was reading when you arrived :—

' Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade,
Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy
To kings that fear their subjects' treachery?'

"My subjects were my passions, that soon became my masters, and drove at me with all the violence of successful rebels. I fled the field to find security, and only found it in solitude. Solitude, therefore, can have no more terrors for me than a castle in which, though lonely, I have found shelter in the midst of a country overrun with robbers."

Such was the winding up of Carleton's account of himself; and upon the whole this visit not only filled me with esteem for him, but gave me unfeigned pleasure for the sake of my species, to

think there was such a man as Carleton among them.

This visit prompted many and serious reflections, chiefly upon the different results which may be made to arise out of almost the same circumstances, according to the difference of character in the actors. It may be supposed I could not help contrasting the real fortitude of Carleton, with the violent but sickly struggle of Fawknor. I did this before the sad catastrophe of the latter had occurred, though it came too soon afterwards ; and though I had seen indications of a ruined ambition, and expected a change, I own the event astounded me, and filled me with grief. As it happened only a few weeks afterwards, I will here note the particulars of the transaction ; having been unfortunately made the too authentic depository of them by the unhappy victim himself.

SECTION XX.

“ Is there a murderer here ? No ! Yes ! I am.”

RICHARD III.

I WAS sitting in my chamber, pleased with many things I had seen, displeased with few, and, on the whole, much satisfied with my tour, which I thought had afforded more variety than London could have supplied,—when my door was opened by a servant whom I knew to have been Fawknor’s, and who delivered me a packet folded in the deepest mourning paper. As he placed it in my hand, the tears gushed into his eyes, and he exclaimed, “ O, Sir, my poor master ! I suppose you have heard.”

Portentous as these words were, I did not altogether suspect the truth, though it was evident there had been death. The valet, who loved his master, who, in truth, was good to his servants, tried to stammer out the particulars, but gave it up, and referred me to the packet. It was in-

dorsed, "To be delivered to Mr. Fielding after my death."

It contained many directions of no consequence to relate, and a feeling letter to myself, which I also withhold. But it also contained a paper, exhibiting his dying feelings, as it were, in his dying words. They need little comment, as no one can read them but with the same reflections. They seem to have been written but a few hours before the fatal act; as he was found with life extinct at six in the morning. The paper was as follows:—

"The bell is now beating two—probably the last I shall ever hear; for having finished the little business I had left, I may be said to have done with time, and finished life. My lamp sinks; it glimmers through the chamber I am about to quit for ever, with a flickering light, every minute fainter and fainter; sad emblem of my sinking self, who, like it, have blazed, am exhausted, and shall soon be extinguished. But welcome total darkness! It is better than the mockery of fruitless efforts to recover. My dread resolve I feel to be right:—it is unalterable. Better to take an everlasting leave by my own will, than submit to be driven with scorn from the place I have filled. Yes! I will die; but that mortification shall never reach me. Yet my life has been a continued error, and I deserve contempt. I owe much to my fellows;

and, above all, to those whom my example may have seduced into the same career of false glitter, perhaps to close it as I am about to do. I will not, therefore, from a shame that would be criminal, forbear to give them the warning of my life. I will rehearse the weaknesses, the faults of that life, before I quit it. I will recount the mischiefs of vanity, encouraged when it ought to have been rooted out; their gradual swelling into high-blown pride, until what I thought triumph almost deprived me of my reason. I had seen my error, indeed, but it had become too inveterate to remedy. To-morrow's dawn will, at least, end it.

“ Few people know my real origin, nor from how little noted, I had almost said, how low a station, my towering aspirations had arisen. The man who for years was one of the leaders in the highest society; who was the avowed friend of one of the highest nobles (alas! that he ever changed, to consign me to self-destruction!); who thought himself the glass of fashion, in which his superiors dressed;—who would think that this man was the son of one who had been a clerk, and almost a servant? A gambling speculation in the funds made him master of a few, a very few thousands, which eventually came to me. But before that he had commenced gentleman, though in so harmless and obscure a way, that, luckily for me, nothing was

known of him, and that bar (for such it would have been) to the position I coveted, never interposed between me and my fate.

“ From my earliest childhood I was vain and ostentatious. At school I was thought promising as a scholar, but the vanity this might have inspired was not that which possessed me. Would that it had, instead of that which did. In station I was inferior to one half of my schoolfellows yet among my superiors, I made an early distinction between those whose fathers were engaged in commerce, or had no titles, and those who had ranked or sprung from the landed gentry. From the latter, and those only, I chose my friends ; and those who were not of this class, though many of them were full of talent and personal merit, and are now far beyond me in the world, I utterly disregarded.

“ We lived in a small suburban villa, a few miles from town. I could not bear it, because it was in a neighbourhood full of shopkeepers, flourishing and happy, but who went backwards and forwards in stage coaches. I myself would never do this, even as a boy, and often spent the last shilling I had left of my pocket-money, in the politer vehicle of a hackney coach. But the first great excitement given to this miserable passion, as it has proved, I felt in a visit I made with a friend to one of

those palaces so frequent in England, called Show Houses, which may be viewed for money. The pomp, the elegance, the luxury of the furniture seemed absolutely supernatural; and some of the family whom I happened to see in their chapel gallery hung with crimson and gold, appeared deities; certainly the most felicitous of mortals. I was then but fourteen; but my heart, I well remember, teemed from that moment with the silly ambition that has consumed me. Envy and swollen pride filled me! I nearly shed tears to think of the distance between me and the favoured mortals I had seen; yet (strange to say, as I was aware of that distance) I secretly, in the very instant, resolved to shape all my exertions in life to the acquisition of such a rank and station, as would admit me some day as an equal in that very gallery. What was then begun was completed by my joining a party to see the Drawing-room at Court. There, my whole attention was fascinated and astounded (oh! misery and wretchedness!) because of so many nobles. At the same time I blushed, and was mortified to desperation, because, as a spectator, I was only admitted into an ante-chamber.

“ Under these dangerous and sickly impressions my father died, and left me at eighteen master of myself and a few hundreds a year. I immediately placed myself at College; and as my income,

though not my future fortune or my connexions, could afford it, entered as a Gentleman Commoner. As to connexions, it was now my zealous endeavour to suppress or elude all knowledge of mine; and as I had comparatively plenty of money, and bore a good surname, few questions were asked, and I made my way to the summit of University ambition, in becoming a member of the very best and highest society. By degrees, owing partly to my expenses, and partly, perhaps chiefly, to a hauteur and reserve of manner I had contracted towards all, even the highest, I was looked upon as a leader, and was considered to my heart's content by all the young nobility and men of fashion. This finished the corruption of my mind, and stamped me with a character which no success can make either happy or respectable, and which, I am stung with remorse to think, can only, after a few years, end in self-disgust and mental ruin.

“ One of my most intimate companions was a young nobleman, afterwards a Duke. Oh! that I had never seen him, or that he had never distinguished me. He was pleased to appear, at least, to love my company; and perhaps at that early and ingenuous age he was sincere. I certainly preferred him to all the world, both then and for a long time afterwards. How much this was owing to his merit, how much to his rank, I did not at

the time inquire, and I now fear to do so. If I have changed since, let him examine his own heart, but not tax mine with caprice. To be abandoned! refused! insulted! reproached! Oh God! let me not think! I have deserved all by my folly; but as I confess it, and my punishment will be dreadful, I trust I may be forgiven, perhaps even pitied. The inconstancy of others I scarcely care for; yet altered looks, coldness, and sneers, instead of warmth, deference, and almost incense, from those whom I had once thought deities, are hard to bear. I feel my heart bursting with mortification, and (would it could turn to virtue!) with remorse. But of what avail? After the life I have led; useless, empty, vain; and thrown away, from no object worthy a man, but only frivolous ambition, grown even ridiculous from its worthlessness; with means wasted beyond all recovery, and the very chance of it denied me by my supposed friend:—what can I do? Oh! God forgive me! What! but despair, and die? One, and one only benefit—(and that not to me,)—may follow the act I have resolved upon. If that catastrophe deter others (if only one other) from falling into the same abyss, this narrative may not be without use.

“ I close with what has been for many weeks the picture of my mind, till I can bear it no longer.

Yet I can scarcely write the lines. The author seems to have been allied to me, in the self-blame and unhappiness of his life ; I trust, from the concluding words, not in his death.

‘ MEMORY.

‘ To me she tells of bliss for ever lost ;
Of fair occasions gone for ever by ;
Of hopes too fondly nursed, too rudely crost ;
Of many a cause to wish, yet fear to die.”

“ I wish this paper to be delivered to Fielding, the only friend I ever had who endeavoured to make me look into myself:—certainly not to the Duke.

“ W. F.”

Such were the last effusions of this devoted man : and whatever his faults, the motives which prompted, and his courage in not suppressing them, deserved more respect than, I am sorry to say, was paid to his memory. His death, melancholy as it was, occasioned very little sensation. It was the talk of a day ; scarcely of that. It had long been expected ; the wonder was, it had not happened before. He had no vices, to be sure, but he had no particular virtues. (Such was now the talk.) He had usurped a place in society which

did not belong to him ! why did he not accept his patron the Duke's offer ? or if he chose to quarrel with his benefactor, why kill himself ? Why not go abroad, where, in some provincial mimic capital, he might live and exhibit finery for a hundred a year ?

Such were the just, delicate, and generous reflections, prompted by the voluntary death of a man who, but a week before, had not ceased to be courted by those who were the first to make them. The Duke, however, was sorry for three whole days ; during one of which he seemed to think it necessary to put himself in the right in regard to his conduct. But as nobody presumed to arraign it, and he found he was not blamed, he tranquilly dismissed the unpleasant subject from his mind. "*Vogue la galère*," seemed every one's motto ; and the name of Fawknor was, in one little week, scarcely remembered, never mentioned.

Notwithstanding the catastrophe I have described, the opinion I had imbibed, of the preponderancy of happiness over misery in the world, was not broken in upon.

" If plagues or earthquakes break not heaven's design,
Why should a Borgia or a Catiline ?"

Every man does not make a false step, and few kill themselves ; but most die honestly in their

beds, however they may have lived. How they may have lived, is the question ; and as far as my inquiry could ascertain, I am bound to say that, though the quantity of pure and unmixed happiness is very small, yet so is unmixed misery. It is the balance of reasonable content over discontent, which is the true question, and upon this I have no hesitation, upon the authority of my tour, to decide.

I think I left myself at Welbourne, the sojourn of a man who seemed to me to understand in perfection the system of what he professed—ease. He allowed it was often negative ; but then he held, and almost proved, that the most certain and permanent happiness was the negation of its contrary, rather than positive enjoyment. Accordingly, absence from care was his abstract definition of happiness ; and, unlike most others, excitement was on all occasions what he was most studious to avoid. Not to covet with eagerness, so as to feel uneasy, was his chief, if not his only secret. A stranger to love, he had not its felicity, but he also had not its agony. Not being a politician, he shared not the politician's triumphs, but was also free from his mortifications. Not being a soldier, he aspired after no glory ; not being a miser, he coveted no wealth. Fond of natural pleasures, he was content with their simplicity ; and a devotee of freedom,

he hated the trammels of fashion. It may be justly said of him, that he was free from all great vices, and had therefore none of their cares. He envied no man; hankered after nothing; and, guarded by moderation, enjoyed everything. He lived alone, *because* it pleased him; went into the world *when* it pleased him; and returned to solitude when the world pleased him no longer. His happiness might be summed up in two predicates—natural cheerfulness, and blamelessness of conduct: if we ought not to add two more—sufficiency for his wants, and the blessing of health.

Such was one of the happiest persons, I think, I ever knew, unless Heartfree might be said to rank with him. The difference between them was, that Blythfield had lived more in the world, and had derived more from general literature. The society of both was limited from choice; but Heartfree's, from position, was *sui generis*; Blythfield's, from his family connections, took a higher range.

SECTION XXI.

“ And yet, for ought I see, they are as sick, that surfeit
with too much,
As they which starve with nothing.”

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

“ There is a sickness
Which puts some of us in distemper, but
I cannot name the disease.”

WINTER'S TALE.

IT was with real regret that I left Welbourne and its philosophical master, though with a promise of visiting him again ; and I now proceeded in earnest towards Bath. I shall not, thought I, find many Carletons or Fawknors there ; any more than the gay flutterers who, with gilded wing, used formerly to people its sun-beams. But though no longer what it was, it has still a character for the remains, at least, of elegance and beauty ;—like many a veteran dame (whom I could name, but will not) of high renown for the *beaux restes* of charms, the power of which the still existing charm

of their grace and manners sufficiently demonstrates.

Such I expected to find, and such I actually found, this beautiful but almost deserted city. Invalids alone were now its principal visitors, and I hoped to reap a harvest of observation.

The first person I saw gave me some promise ; for on entering the town, stretched upon the cushions of an exquisitely-contrived barouche, and going to take his daily airing, I beheld the illustrious Yawn, of Yawn Hall, whom the reader will recollect we left at Speenham, progressing on his road to the city of health. As at Speenham I had seen nothing but his back and legs, I should not have known him but for my groom, who had scraped acquaintance with his servant, now in the barouche with his master, and informed me accordingly. On meeting him, I had observed with not much pleasure his sallow cheek and sunken eye, and a sort of distressed brow and weary look. I own, therefore, I had not much ambition to examine farther an apparently immense mass of pampered discontent. But Etheredge, who had known him in the world, had written me word, that if I met him again I should find him well worth investigating, and had even sent me a letter of introduction, which I at last resolved to deliver.

Imagine my surprise, when I found myself re-

ceived with a politeness of manner indicating a man who had been in the habits of the best company. His querulous tone had not vanished, but his conversation was sensible, and his look sometimes, though seldom, almost animated. Yet we talked of little but the common topics of the world, in which we found we had many common acquaintance, whom I was surprised to observe he handled with humour bordering upon something still more keen :—for I left him with an impression more in favour of his wit than his good nature ; wit which seemed to rouse him to notice foibles and failures, rather than what he called the dull machinery, not of content, but of dogged submission. This, he said, was the general lot of the world. In his satire he showed nothing like ennui, though a good deal of spleen. In fact, from his own confessed disappointments, I thought that those of others did not displease him ; and I left him not over pleased myself, but sufficiently curious to resolve to see him again. I had afterwards several interviews with him, which seemed to give him as much pleasure as his jaded mind was capable of receiving ; and certainly a great deal to his domestic governor, (for so his servant appeared,) who told me in terms, I always did his master good.

“ To tell you the truth, Sir,” said he, “ the poor gentleman complains of being, as he says, per-

petually *bored* by people who would not care if he was dead; and yet he complains more if they don't come to see him; so I hope, as he likes you, you will come often."

I assured Mr. Barwis I would do my possible, especially as he told me his master had naturally a good disposition; of which, in regard to generosity, he gave me several instances, although he owned that his charities were often marred by a cross manner of bestowing them. And yet I myself found this was not always so; as an example, which I witnessed after I had obtained much of his confidence, proved in a rather curious way.

I came in upon him one day, in the middle of a quarrel with this said Barwis, who had neglected some orders, trifling in themselves, but which he thought essential. His tone was of the loudest, and he accused the poor man of wilful neglect: God knows whether deservedly or not. He was foaming with rage; threw himself into a chair with violence, and not minding me, almost gnashed his teeth; till growing ashamed of the indecency, he began to wish he could behave better, and confessed as much when Barwis had left the room.

"I am a sad beast," said he, striking his forehead. "No irritable man ever was, or ever can be, happy. May God change me!"

At that moment a chaffier crawled across his

hand, and he had a particular aversion to chaffers. This kindled him again.

“ This creature, too,” said he, in a tone of despair, “ is, like everything else, leagued against me ;” and he lifted up his other hand to crush it. “ Yet why ?” cried he, and stopped. “ Poor wretch ! he has little of life ; why should I shorten it ? He is not like me, sour, impatient, mindless of my Maker’s benefits. May I be worse than I am, if I hurt him ;” and he shook him off among the flowers that decorated the windows.

This led me to suppose there had been seeds of good-nature, if I might not say good temper, in him ; but sadly, indeed, were they stifled ; and I bore witness to his own apothegm, that no irritable man could be happy.

SECTION XXII.

“There is a sickness
Which puts some of us in distemper, but
I cannot name the disease.”

WINTER'S TALE.

“Quel grand homme ! Rien ne peut lui plaire.”

CANDIDE.

How poor Yawn became so irritable, if ever he had been otherwise, was now a curious question; for, from all I could gather from many at Bath who knew his history, though much respected for integrity and abilities, and therefore with many friends, he had few companions. Of this he was himself sensible, and that very sense of it only irritated him more. Blame was laid upon his health, which was certainly not good, but made infinitely worse by his discontents. I wondered at myself, therefore, in persevering to cultivate him; but his conversation when in tolerable temper, and the confidence that seemed, as he said, due to me for being the only person who, for a long time, could

bear with him, gave me hopes that I might, in the end, find out the real cause of his malady. My patience was rewarded, if not by discovering the cause, yet, at least, by a short history of its rise and progress. This he once, in a favourable interval, gave me from his own mouth.

“ Yes !” said he, “ I confess I am what everybody calls me, *blasé* ; for every source I ever had of interest or pleasure is dried up. I have been so regularly disappointed in everything I undertook, that I can undertake no more. The elasticity of mind which I *believe* I once had, is gone, I fear, for ever ; and my body being bloated, as I feel, with constitutional ill-health, my existence is a burthen to me.”

“ Yet you seem,” said I, “ to know the world so well, that I should have hoped some, if not many things, would have rewarded you for living in it. With not half your experience, I should be sorry to have met with universal disappointment.”

“ Your feelings,” said he, “ though so much younger, are perhaps not so acute as those with which, for my sins, I have been tormented. Oh ! of all human evils, (and there are enough of them,) guard me from too much sensibility.”

“ Yet sensibility,” said I, “ is one of the greatest sources of delight.”

“ And also,” returned he, “ of misery. Mine I

pushed to the utmost in everything, till it became too attenuated to sustain itself, and it broke under me from very weakness. Why was I so born? Why not with feelings blunted like other and happier people?—those porters, for example, whom we see merry under their burthens, because sure to be relieved from them, and then all the jollier for the exertion. It is nothing to them where they go, or whom they carry.”

“And are we not at liberty,” said I, “to imitate these porters?”

“No! The porter and the gentleman are two different beings, and unfortunately I was a gentleman. Had I had to work for my bread, or known less than I do, I might have been happier.”

“This,” said I, “is surely not the creed of men of education. Yours, for example, must have given you a taste for everything liberal: conversation, the Arts, the Court, the Muses, the song, and the dance; the last, if only as exhibited at that classical spectacle, the Opera.”

“Alas! Sir,” said he, “how I wish my faculties had been as blunted as those that can find pleasure in any of the classifications you have mentioned. As to conversation, what is it but an effort for wit, which perhaps will not come, unless prepared for, and then its flavour is lost.”

“ But, suppose a sober discussion.”

“ What over a *bottle*, which inflames argument into temporary dislike, and sometimes lasting hatred !”

“ Suppose politics !”

“ Worse and worse !—all personal rancour, and no truth.”

“ Well, then, elegant literature and taste !”

“ Yes ! to let in the quarrels of authors, and irritable wasps, their abettors in point of taste ; a subject which immediately becomes personal, and therefore offensive.”

“ But surely it is the character of literary merit to create mutual respect !”

“ Yes !” said he. “ Witness the struggles in the literary club,—Johnson ! Beauclerk ! Goldsmith ! Witness Swift and Prior * ! Be assured, Sir, the soul of conversational pleasure is good breeding, and to this everything personal is an enemy.”

* I suppose Yawn alludes to Swift’s journal to Stella, i. 62. “ Prior came in after dinner, and the secretary said, ‘ The best thing I ever read is not yours, but Dr. Swift’s on Vanburgh.’ Prior was damped, till I stuffed him with two or three compliments.”

Again : “ Mr. Harley made me read a paper of verses of Prior. I read them plain, without any fine manner, and Prior swore I never should read any of his again ; but he would be revenged, and read some of mine as bad.”—i. 105.

“ Agreed,” said I, “ but here your situation must have given you advantages which many others have not. You have known drawing-rooms, and royal banquets, and balls; in short, refined elegance in every shape.”

“ Bah !” cried he, “ the whole a painted mask ; not a child of nature among them.”

“ You had a resource, then, against this, by your residence among country neighbours.”

“ Country clowns !” he answered, “ and quite as dishonest.”

“ But the arts and the stage !”

“ Miserable, and worst of all. Who can sit five hours long, over a drawling hero, or a puling heroine? No good company left in the boxes; no good taste in the pit. The genius of tragedy and comedy expelled for the silly foolery of Punchinello, or elephants, or horses, better seen in a menagerie. No! Sir; Goethe was right for forswearing the theatre, when a dog commanded more attention than the poet.”

“ Of course, then,” said I, pushed out of everything, “ the Opera had no charms for you.”

“ For whom, Sir,” returned he, “ can it have charms, if, like myself, they love genuine music and graceful dancing? The music all mannerism, the dancing all spinning. I was sickened to death by them both, and still more with the fools, my

countrymen, who run after them with open mouth and vacant stare, the very emblems of shallowness and affectation."

I had nothing now left for it, by way of argument with such universal prejudice; so, not to lose my object, I observed, it was a pity he had been born so rich, for that a profession might, by necessary employment, have hindered him from brooding over the dark side of things.

"Sir," said he, "I was not born to the fortune I possess; though I had too much money, as well as sensibility, for the profession I chose; which was the law, but for which I was spoiled before I came to it."

"How so?"

"I was educated at a school where I had no competition, and afterwards at a college where there was no discipline. I was therefore, at both, left to my bane—self-indulgence. Still I was fond of letters, and so far a classic, that I obtained prizes, and enjoyed, for awhile, a university reputation. I say for awhile, because my success was soon forgotten, and the most dull Bœotian I ever knew, in other respects, beat me in mathematics; which, giving the crown imperial of science to the successful competitor, I was reduced to a second-rate order. I was, however, an adept in logic, and took so high a degree, that I would not go to

London for six months, for fear of the plague of congratulations. When I did venture, to my astonishment, not one of my acquaintance knew anything about it. I immediately took my name off the College books, and turned my back upon the University for ever.

“ At the Bar I had as great aspirations, and still greater disappointments. The logical head which had made me so good a wrangler at Cambridge, together with my classical taste, fitted me, I thought, peculiarly for the profession. I watched and criticized the most eloquent pleaders, and those who revelled most in business. Their fame, and also their golden briefs, inspired me; for I thought myself better than some, and as good as most. I dissected the most eloquent speeches; and thought there were faults in them which *I* could have avoided. Many rolled in guineas,—nobody, at least from apparent *merit*, could tell how, and least of all, myself. But I found these were, most of them, the sons, brothers, or cousins of attorneys, who were the great dispensers of briefs. By them my Cambridge reputation had never been heard of, and if it had, would not have availed. Well;—I was told not to despair; and illustrious instances were mentioned, of Chancellors who had toiled ten years before they got a brief. If I would but wait one single opportunity of distinguishing myself, my

fortune would be made. The opportunity did come. A chance but important trial brought on an intricate question, which I was to argue. The court was against me ; but I shook, and, in the end, converted them. Here was one triumph ; but this even was exceeded by another. A great county cause on the circuit was entrusted to me, my leader having been taken ill. The senior of the circuit, and many others, senior to me, were my antagonists. The eyes of the whole court were upon me. The fight lasted ten hours, I was proclaimed victor by the jury, and, as if nothing should be wanting, not only was I complimented in open court by the judge, but my liberal opponent whom I had beaten bore tribute to my exertions. My fortune was now certain, and on the next circuit I went down to take possession of it. Will it be believed ? Not only did I not get a brief, but the party whose cause I had gained gave the only case he had to one of my opponents !

Was I not right in believing there was huggery in this * ? But right or wrong, could flesh and blood bear it ? Was I not excusable in saying the law was a d——d jilt, and in resolving to abandon her for

* Huggery. Vide law slang. An expressive word much used by barristers without briefs against those who have plenty, and signifying the court paid, with an interested view, by a counsel to an attorney.

ever? In a word, I quitted the profession in disgust, and never thought of it again but with execration."

Here Mr. Yawn's countenance gave the fullest support to his assertion; for I never saw such sovereign contempt, mingled with such indignation, as it exhibited in this recollection, though of an incident that had passed five-and-twenty years before.

"Well, Sir," he continued, "as far as fortune was concerned, I had no need to care; for my cousin, the head of the antient and numerous family of the Yawns, to whom I was heir-at-law, died without a will, and I succeeded to the whole estate. But with it I believe I succeeded to all the vapours and indigestions, and splenetic maladies, which have characterized our family from the beginning of time. The estate was reckoned eight thousand a-year, and its rent-roll was more. I never pocketed four, yet was expected to live up to the rack-rent. Half my tenants were adventurers who failed; others tore my soul out for repairs; the lightning set fire to one farm, and incendiaries to another; there were insurances I could not recover; and having been fool enough to engage in farming on the strength of book calculations, I found that every calculation was a lie, every promise broken, and Arthur Young an im-

postor. Instead of making three rents, as I was assured I should, I did not make one. Here, therefore, was another jilt as bad as the law, and like the law, I abandoned her ;—shutting up Yawn Hall, and letting the farm for anything I could get ; which, owing to what the rascals said was my mismanagement, was very little.”

Here my narrator gave another so terrible a proof how much his nature corresponded with his name, that had I been in Africa, I should have been afraid of the approach of a lion. Recovering this, he went on :—

“ Though from my youth I had ever looked upon the character and position of a man of landed property, living upon it in peace and plenty, surrounded by respected neighbours and attached tenants, as one of the first personages in England, I found myself here, also, the victim of imagination and humbug. As for my respected neighbours, they were all at loggerheads, not merely about politics or game, (that would have been legitimate,) but upon every point of discussion that could arise—turnpikes, infirmaries, canals, enclosures, and county offices, down to the election of a beadle. Into these I should have been drawn, had I not had too much contempt for the objects to embark either in hostilities or alliances about them. My reward was,

I was sent to Coventry by them all, and my consolation not a great one, in thinking my country neighbours country blockheads.

“ In short, instead of friends I found I made enemies; and though I feasted them as a man who had four thousand a-year, yet, as my rent-roll was eight, I was thought of, and treated, as a miser. So much for peace and plenty, and respected neighbours.

“ Then, as to my attached tenants—in the growing spirit of the times they all wanted to be landlords, and thought me a usurper. Some of them had grown rich under the Yawns: a very fit reason why the Yawns should be expelled their beds of down, and take up with a flock mattress. One impudent rascal, the son of one of my farmers, whom my cousin had got into Christ’s Hospital for education, attacked me in the papers for being scarcely, what he called, live lumber; and he compared Yawn Hall, merely because I had put an end to the orgies which used to be held there, to the cave of Trophonius. A pretty use this of the advantages of book-learning to the lower orders!”

I could not help laughing, both at this sally of the young rebel, and at the way in which my aristocratic friend took it. But I found it displeased him.

“ I see, Sir,” said he, “ I have tired you; and

you may, perhaps, think the young man right. If so—'

I assured him, rather alarmed for the history I wished to hear, that he was mistaken; that I thought the fellow was an ungrateful rascal.

"Well," continued he, rather pacified, "I will proceed. I was still young; young enough to think seriously of what had long absorbed my best and softest wishes. I found myself soured almost to vinegar by my country disappointments; for, such had been my notion of a country gentleman's happy and admitted importance, that it became my stronghold of imagination, and often and often I had built upon the foundations of Yawn Hall one of the most glorious *châteaux en Espagne*. But let that pass; I have quitted it, I have no doubt for ever; for I look upon the whole suite of country occupations and country interests, with a view to the self-consequence and contentment they are supposed to confer, as the grossest delusion that ever deceived expectation or mortified poor human nature."

Here Yawn, of Yawn Hall, gave another yawn, still louder and longer than the last, from which I could only recover him by reminding him that he seemed to have begun to glance, at least, at a very tender subject, which, if not disagreeable, I should be glad if he would proceed with.

“O! ay,” said he, “I was going to tell you I had been a lover, ‘sighing like a furnace;’ and for a few weeks, till I married, I was, I really believe, excited enough to be happy.”

“Good heavens!” I exclaimed, “what can be coming?”

“Very little,” said he, “but a commonplace history of the courtship of a fancied angel, and of a marriage with a real devil. It was followed, however, (which, indeed, is not commonplace,) by a redemption, like Othello’s, from slavery.”

I became all ear.

“I see you wonder,” said he, “and I almost wonder at myself for even hinting at the subject; but somehow or another it sometimes opens a valve to my discontent. At once then let me confess that, having been a fool, I was punished by being a cuckold.”

I started.

“Nay, then,” said he, “for a young man, you have paid little attention to the annals of gallantry, and have no recollection of the divorce from her husband of Lady Pandora Papillon, and her marriage with Colonel Squander.”

“I beseech you, my dear Sir,” said I, meaning to stop a disagreeable subject, “do not—” but he would not be stopped.

“No!” said he, “though the mention of it recalls

disgrace, and adds to my sense of the delusions of every thing in life, I have no pain of heart to be afraid of. In a word, though I believe I, what is called, loved Lady Pandora before marriage, not only I am not sure of it, because I doubt whether there ever was such a thing as love in the world, but I despised her so much after it, and thought so little of her family, notwithstanding all their dignities, that I have not a feeling of regret in talking of the affair."

"Lady Pandora, I now recollect," said I, "was a woman of high rank."

"She was the daughter," returned he, "of a family higher in title than purse, and, as many are, proud in proportion as they were poor. She was fair, and, as I thought, gentle and virtuous; much looked at, but little courted, for she had not a sixpence; and was therefore only fit for some rich merchant, or country booby like myself, who wanted to mend the breed. This alone induced her family to allow her to think of a Yawn, notwithstanding his very antient descent."

"I am glad to think," said I, "that you can treat this subject so cheerily."

"I hated the whole clique of them," rejoined he, "for their insufferable insolence, and her for her hypocrisy; so heartily, indeed, that this history is almost the only disappointment of my life over

which I do not moan. After I was accepted, I found I had much upon my hands with her family. The very poorest for their rank in the kingdom, they assumed the credit of disinterestedness for consenting to so disparaging a match, and a settlement of a poor two thousand a-year. One of her relations protested in form against the connection; but her brother, Lord Papillon, and his wife, had the insolence to protect us. I returned this by cutting them all, and separating my wife from their society. This did not add to our peace at home. The Lady Pandora complained bitterly of her sirname, though the Yawns, without being titled, were incontestibly known in the world before the Papillons. She protested she never would reside at Yawn Hall; which I did not oppose;—but she resolved to have a house in Grosvenor-square; which I did. This was our first quarrel. Our second was worse. As her family, from poverty, had no house in town themselves, they no doubt thought it would be vastly convenient to have the use of mine. They therefore bitterly resented my refusal, and gave out that Lady Pandora Papillon had married a beggar; and though I had been forced to defray her whole *trousseau* myself, both she and they complained that there were not diamonds enough.

“ I laughed at this mixture of insolence and mean-

ness, and the silly airs of her family gave me little trouble; but I grieved to find these airs so close to me at home, and my temper was certainly not mended by it. One quarrel now succeeded another, and the gentle Pandora, as I thought her, turned out an absolute shrew. She was resolved, she said, to visit her family; and thinking it but fair, I agreed, provided she did not oblige me to visit too.

“ I was taken at my word; for it was astonishing how affectionate she suddenly became towards her brother and sister, Lord and Lady Papillon, with whom she now passed most of her time. But this was soon explained; for I found Colonel Squander was always of the party; and to shorten a disagreeable story, it ended in an elopement.

“ This was rather a relief than a trouble; for I easily obtained a divorce, which the damages I got from Squander served to pay for; and my revenge was perfect, when he was forced to make this faithful creature Lady Pandora Squander.”

Neither groan nor gape followed this part of Mr. Yawn's story, which was ended with a sort of sardonic grin. But the sickening thought came across him, that formed, as he said he believed he was, for domestic happiness, his confidence both in the affection and honour of woman was for ever destroyed.

“ Yes !” said he, “ though my wife had plagued the heart I thought she would have charmed, so that I was glad she fled ; yet with her fled all that I had taught myself to love, respect, and hope from the sex :—a dreadful inroad this upon my store of happiness.”

I felt disposed to combat these opinions of Mr. Yawn, and to defend the calumniated sex, on the score of many bright examples. But I saw, spite of the bravery which his personal dislike of his spouse had kindled, that disappointment in this great point had no small share in producing that wanness of cheek and irritation of nerve which certainly denoted an unhappy man. I therefore silently let him proceed to other unfortunate recollections.

SECTION XXIII.

MR. YAWN CONTINUES HIS STORY.

“ Ah! Quel grand homme ! Rien ne peut lui plaire.”

CANDIDE.

“ Give me your hand: I will swear to the king thou art as honest and true a fellow as any in Bohemia.

“ You may say it, but not swear it.

“ Not swear it?

“ If it be ne’er so false, a true gentleman may swear it on behalf of his friend.”

WINTER’S TALE.

‘ CURED by my first, of all thoughts of a second, marriage, for awhile I let sloth get the better of me, and went about a listless sloven, who, crossed in all his early objects, thought there were no others to pursue. From this I was hardly roused by an offer from the borough of Yawn town, where my estate lay, to return me to Parliament without greater expense than a poor two thousand pounds. Would you believe that I was such a greenhorn as to accept the terms and lay down the money? I had even no particular wish for, if I had not a dread of, the turmoil and exertions which Parliament would

impose upon a spirit already much worn, and beginning to be much soured. But I myself was aware of the danger of giving way to this.

“ I have said I was a listless sloven, and I was so. I little relished appearing in public after my wife’s infidelity. I had sickened of the Law from its ingratitude and injustice, and of a country life for the reasons I have given. I therefore shut myself up in town, at first for a day, then for a week, and then a month, ungartered, unrazored, and even uncoated ; for I often wore nothing but my dressing-gown. Yet what my thoughts were, what my occupations, I could not tell. I read a little ; but my reading was light, desultory, and little satisfactory, except in regard to history, which was my favourite. I had denied myself to everybody ; and at last nobody came to see me. In this emergency I caught at the offer of the seat, though I dreaded it, as a man holds out his arm to be bled, though afraid of the lancet. Bled I was ; for an opposition opened like thunder. My two thousand pounds were gone in two days, and I was therefore obliged to come down with more, or abandon the advantages I had gained ; which, I was told, would be decisive if I persevered. I did so, and succeeded, though at an enormous expense, and, I own, against my expectations.

“ I was now in Parliament, and for a short time

excited ; particularly as, owing to the monstrous price I had paid for my seat, I was supposed to be a card worth having :—for my expense was set down to my zeal for the party I was inclined to support. Although, therefore, it was no more than an inclination, I was by his own desire introduced to the leader ; who paid me so many compliments upon my liberality in favour of my principles, that, added to the high character he happened to possess, I suffered myself, without knowing it, to be considered as a party man. Yet heaven knows how contrary this was to my disposition or resolution ; and my uneasiness was only increased, on being told by a friend whom I consulted, that having accepted a dinner from this leader, and been invited to attend a meeting at his house of his particular supporters, I could not be off from being considered as one of them. I was rather startled at this ; but, not being convinced of the soundness of the reasoning, I resolved to pursue my own plan of independence, and vote as I thought right. Unluckily, for the first month I quite approved my leader's measures ; which made it harder to retreat. But afterwards, a question arising on which I differed, I voted against him. You will hardly believe, Sir, what a sensation to my discredit this caused. I was stigmatized as an apostate, a treacherous, trimpery, trifling politician, not worth having ; and as

I had grown too indolent to take part in a debate, even though to defend myself, I found I was falling into contempt. My fair fortune passed for nothing, as giving me a right to act for myself; and the expense I had been at for the seat, was only set down to my being an adventurer more bold than common, who was labouring for his own advantage. I bit my lips almost through when I heard of this scandal, and shut myself up again for another month in disgust. Unlucky again. This was also construed into still stronger proof of my delinquency, because it was clear I was ashamed of showing my face.

“ Thus I found that an impenetrable assurance was as necessary a quality as any, for a man to be at his ease in Parliament; which was exemplified every day by some of the greatest rogues; who, if they had not belonged to some party or other, would have been spurned in society; but, being in Parliament, they had only to swear they were honest men, defamed for their attachment to the people, and they were immediately whitewashed, and protected by all of the same clan.

“ But what will not party do, even with honestly-intentioned men? For I myself in time became one of a party, notwithstanding this burst of independence at starting. For too soon I found that he who acts only from his own impulses, and with-

out allies, is nothing. I thus followed a party, and acted like a homager, though I swore fealty to no man ; and nothing but my aptitude to take great disgusts, and my increasing indifference to all that did not please me, prevented me from being to the full as dishonest, that is to say, as accommodating to persons and circumstances, as the most prejudiced.

“ Though, from sheer indolence, I was but little behind the scenes, how many unfair things did I not witness ! how many prejudices did I not adopt as truths ! how many honest men did I not think rogues ! how many rogues, honest men ! It is absolutely ludicrous to think with what perverted vision every thing is seen by the collective wisdom of the nation. I mean not to say that party will make good men knowingly invent falsehoods ; but it will make them believe them as long as it serves their purpose. This, then, I gathered as a certainty,—that no true history can be written by a party man, at the time when the events recorded happened, or unless, as in me, not only the heyday of the blood is over, but the feelings of party are extinguished.

“ A partisan in politics, therefore, is like a partisan in war ; he can have no parleys with his conscience, no scruples of cold blood. Even your eye-witnesses to *facts* can scarcely be believed ; your relators of conversations, seldom ; your com-

mentators and retailers, never. The only thing I got, therefore, by my parliamentary career was, to strip off a pleasing mask from public men, by finding most of them acting under false characters and on false pretences; and by destroying my confidence in history (no matter whether deluded or not), I deprived myself of one of my principal sources of mental pleasure. But thus it has always been; one prospect after another has failed, or grown dim upon my wearied sight, till I have cared little whether I have had eyes to open or not."

Here a profound sigh heaved the loaded chest of this martyr to spleen, which really moved my pity. But he went on:—

"Though I was enlightened by the short vision I had of Parliament, yet, as it was not in the manner I wished, and as, by way of consolation, self indulgence (curse on it as a comfort!) got more and more hold of me, I was by no means disposed to spend another five thousand for the benefits I had reaped. On a dissolution, therefore, I resolved to escape. This, however, I chiefly mention to mark what followed. Though I abdicated from real disgust, it was all attributed by my political friends partly to the rawness of my experience, partly to parsimony. This was a lie. But it was also agreed that I was not made for a legislator in these times;—

and this was true. Moreover, I was sneered at as a man who set up to act for himself, though scarcely out of leading-strings,—notwithstanding my five-and-thirty years and my education at the Bar. These opinions vexed me, though they were of little consequence ; but they added to irritation : and this was not diminished by finding, that if ever I had coveted distinction, it was now all gone, with the seat I had relinquished.

“ I had little room to complain of a continuation of abuse ; for in a month I had ceased to be talked of ; in the next Parliament I was no longer remembered ; and in a year no one knew whether I was alive or dead. I even, strangely to myself, lost all my political acquaintance ; and men with whom I had banqueted, and who had frequently banqueted with me, now scarcely touched their hats to me.”

“ This is marvellous,” said I ; “ I had no notion that the absorption of politics could have so affected the social relations. But you, of course, had other resources.”

“ Why, very few ; and none in the way of ambition, or even of a serious pursuit. In truth, the abandonment of me by my associates, some of whom I really valued, merely because I had withdrawn from a career which I thought neither improved our minds nor hearts, if it did not in many

instances undermine both ; this, I own, soured me more and more. I had failed both with men and women ; and the ascetic disposition with which most of the Yawns are tinctured, began now to show itself, not less decidedly from its being accompanied by the gout ; which from that time to this (I wish it had been more like my political friends,) has more or less tormented me. This, as mere pain, I believe I could have borne, had I been in good-humour with the world ; but treated as I had been, I found nothing to cheer the view I took of it. What I had seen had made me think that, whatever the appearance, all was humbug ; every man, and certainly every woman, an actor ; and that if the heart could be dissected, it would be found full of falsehood."

" Shocking !" I exclaimed. " Are you not yourself a contradiction to this ?"

" No !" he replied. " Like Hamlet, ' I am indifferent honest ; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not borne me.' Shall I go on with the quotation ? ' I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious. We are arrant knaves all ; believe none of us.' "

This was said with so determined an aspect, as well as tone of voice, that I was almost afraid to reply, for fear of making things worse ; but could

not help asking why none of us were to be believed, and particularly himself.

“ Ask,” said he, “ every conventional form of speech ever used ; every letter ever written ending with ‘ Yours sincerely : ’ ask all the protestations that ever have been made, particularly of disinterestedness, or candour, or of the purity of love. Ask all memoirs, and all biography, particularly autobiography, and Doddington and Horace Walpole ; or if you wish something really pure and uncontaminated, read the newspapers.”

I smiled at this ; but he went on seriously to say—

“ Yes ! read those privileged knaves, who in their cursed cant profess not so much to be the *depositories*, as the *creators* forsooth, of public opinion ; and see how that opinion is formed. A system of lying, wickedly imagined, artfully pursued, and pertinaciously repeated, spite of ten thousand refutations, is embodied in print every day, and every hour ; in every book, and every paper, that can find a reader, whether in the palace or the pot-house ; the address on the hustings, or the placard on the walls. Ridicule and blasphemy are added as auxiliaries in ambuscade ; and the whole is with hellish industry introduced into the factory, the workshop, the cottage, and the coal-pit : whose in-

habitants are told that all government is corrupt, all kings tyrants, and all people oppressed. Thus all, for now full fifty years, have been drenched in lie, until, like the droppings of water on a stone, an impression having been made, however fraudulently, the conspirators at length rear their impudent heads, and tell you that the spirit of the times has pronounced itself. This would be nothing, but that those whose duty it is to repress such mischief, for their own purposes foster, extend, and excite it, till it becomes universal, and must be obeyed. Now out upon such a diabolical perversion of truth and principle, and the farce of calling this the blessings of the press. It smells in one's very nostrils—foh ! I desire to know whether I am right or wrong in my opinion, among politicians at least, of the prevalency of falsehood.”

I could say little in answer to this burst ; because though my feeling about it was cooler, I was much inclined to the opinion myself. I however asked what falsehoods most particularly moved his indignation.

“ The whole cry of corruption,” answered he, “ that has sounded from one end of the kingdom to the other, as having consumed our vitals ; when there never was a time in history when public men were less corrupt. The grossest inventions, as well as misrepresentations, are propagated by the wicked

among the simple, till they are believed, and then it is too late to refute them. Men, who never received a farthing of public money, having, in fact, never been clothed even with a nominal office, are accused of receiving their twenty and thirty thousands a year; and those who are to profit by the discontent kindled by these lies, quietly lie by, watching the effervescence it has occasioned, and glad to turn it to account. Again, then, am I not right in saying that the career of politics is dishonest, and its professors humbugs? And shall I be blamed if I renounce the hope of ever finding happiness in such a career*?"

* I cannot help remembering here, what greatly confirms the account of this melancholy Jaques. In the course of my tour, long after this conversation with Yawn, I found myself obliged to put up for the night in the respectable town of — in — and diocese of —. Wanting amusement, I proceeded to the principal or only bookseller's shop in the place, and asked for some mental food. The mistress, the only person in the shop, immediately put into my hands some one or two dozen of howling pamphlets, complaining of king, lords, commons, ministers, bishops, judges, churchwardens and overseers, army and navy, the bank, the universities, &c., &c., and exalting only ploughmen, weavers, industrious shopkeepers, and the like. This produced a sort of political discussion, in which I found my fair Reformer (for she was fair) had a great deal more of assertion than proof; which rather annoying her, she said, "Come, I will call down those who will soon do for you." So opening a staircase door, she called her husband, who was the president of the night of a Reform Club in the town, for which he was in the act

Though our friend Yawn was at the height of his spleen when he said this, yet he had, at least for the time, cast away his listlessness and *ennui*, and really threw so much energy into his words and action, as to give me quite a new idea of his character. The theme acted upon him like assafoetida under the nose of a hysterical lady; but he soon relapsed into his former apathy, only much the weaker for the exertion. Seeing this, I thought

of preparing a written speech. Not liking to be so disturbed, he was in no very good humour with me, or his wife either, but flew at me like a housedog, upon hearing that I denied almost all his wife's facts as to the abuses and corrupt waste of public money. He seemed, however, no better informed than his partner, who appeared shocked when I corrected almost every one of his assertions; among the rest, that the bishop of the diocese (not a rich one), had 60,000*l.* a year out of the taxes. He had only one argument for every thing, and that was the female one (I suppose in compliment to his wife), "Men were corrupt because they were Ministers; and Ministers corrupt, because they are so." Again, "No king ought to have a million a year pocket-money, or for mere eating and drinking. It was a shame, &c. &c."

"Well, but if the million pay all the expenses of government, the salaries of judges, and other offices!"

"O! that would be different."

And when I told him that was so, and that his bishop had not even four thousand a year, and nothing at all out of taxes, for visiting 1200 parishes, he looked foolish, and not at all the less so for his wife, who had listened very attentively, exclaiming—

"Ah! John, you may as well go up-stairs again; I always thought you was but a superficial!"

it better to leave him, though I wished him to have gone on with his narrative. But perceiving all his flame extinct, and himself almost reduced to a few embers, I took my leave, assigning the task of reviving and bracing him up again to his faithful domestic, Mr. Barwis.

SECTION XXIV.

“ To write and read be henceforth treacherous.”

CYMBELINE.

“ Ah ! Quel grand homme ! Rien ne peut lui plaire !”

CANDIDE.

THE history which the owner of Yawn Hall gave me, of the rise and progress of the designed and systematic falsehood which had bred the *asserted* spirit of the times, reminded me very much of Gorewell. Energy and decision, however, were wanting to complete the comparison. It was the want of this energy, or, as he termed it himself, a too fine sensibility, that made him what he was. He yielded to disgust like Gorewell ; but did not, like him, expatriate himself, and turn to other exertions as a remedy. Even here, however, there was a glimmering of likeness ; for Yawn, too, had betaken himself to study as a resource.

“ Yes !” said he, at my next interview with him, “ I for two years turned my back upon my old associates, and lived in my library.”

“ And I hope,” said I, “ reaped from it all you wished.”

“ All I expected,” returned he, “ which was, in truth, nothing at all. But I was resolved to give myself a fair chance. Having, therefore, proscribed history, or reduced it to mere chronology, which I thought would not do any great harm, I soared to something nobler, and, as I hoped, more certain and satisfactory.”

He paused. “ I am curious to know what,” said I.

“ Umph !” he replied. “ I did not characterize it well,—but it was Divinity.”

“ Good,” said I.

“ No, Sir, no ! very bad. Worse (because honester) than politics themselves. I say honester, because, though never was there so gross a tissue of absurdities, as the gibberish, false glosses, and unintelligible trash with which hot brains and swelling hearts have encrusted the plain and simple truths of real religion, loading them as with the weights of *peine forte et dure*, till they almost cease to breathe ; yet still the blockheads and zealots, and even martyrs who have done this, have in the main, if fools, been honest fools, and, therefore, puzzle us the more. Yet passion, fierce, blind and bloody, has even here prevailed, to expel all hope of certainty, all satisfaction of doubts, or the de-

velopment of mystery; and when I had plunged into controversy, though the dreams of sectaries were laughable, yet their fanaticism was horrible and revolting, and their treatment of one another both indecent and cruel. I pass their burnings for the good of the soul, and the thousand pieces of either nonsense or inanity, which disfigure almost all commentators. But what think you of the language of Calvin to Luther, both engaged in the same sublime and sacred duty, of expounding truth from Scripture? ‘Beast — blockhead — dog — swine!’ are the terms he employs, the better to recommend his doctrines. What doctrines can be convincing, so recommended? But then comes Erasmus, the polished, the elegant, the learned; so polished, so elegant (and add, so afraid of losing certain pensions he enjoyed), that he dreads to speak out! After poring over him, therefore, for a month, you are never the wiser.

“Worse than this; we labour deep among the commentators, and find our foundation only weakened. It is always so, by the attempt to prove too much. Not satisfied with the sufficient evidence we have, we are crammed with farther proofs, both by saints of old and modern bishops, till our reason revolts, and we are in danger of being altogether blinded by too much light. This reminded me of

those emphatic verses, of a real and unsophisticated divine, and a wise good man, upon this very subject :—

“ ‘ Against her foes Religion well defends
Her sacred truths, but often fears her friends.
If learn’d, their pride, if weak, their zeal she dreads :
And *their* heart’s weakness who have the soundest heads *.’

“ Still more I felt the description of the same excellent poet, who tells you truly that by divinity we learn—

“ ‘ When grieved to pray, when injured to forgive,
And with the world in charity to live.’

“ Yet he adds,—

“ ‘ But questions nice, where doubt on doubt arose,
Awaked to war the long-contending foes ;
For dubious meanings learn’d polemics strove,
And wars on faith prevented works of love †.’

“ This is all too true ; and though I preserve my Bible, I have no satisfaction in half the commentators.”

“ I am glad, however,” said I, “to hear you would preserve the Bible.”

“ Undoubtedly,” returned he, with warmth ; “but I would burn nine-tenths of the comments that have been made upon it. For though the Old and

* Crabbe : The Library.

† Ibid.

New Testaments, in their simplicity, are a blessing to our hearts, yet let the head interfere, in the shape of exposition or disputation, and adieu to satisfaction. Depend upon it, if you go beyond your beautiful prayers, or your confidence in God, as promised by Christ, and seek to know more through the aid of human learning, you will be swamped, and lost past all redemption."

"I am afraid then," said I, "that this part of your studies did not bring you the restoration you sought."

"No! nor any other part. Everything I read only increased my spleen from its eventual delusion, save only the real practical sciences that are the parents of the Arts. Yes! experimental philosophy was always unobscured by doubt or drawback. But this was the only subject that was so:—and my usual fortune attended me there; for I had no taste for it."

"There is surely, however," said I, "something in Moral, as well as in Natural philosophy. What beautiful theories!"

"Yes!" cried he; "and as certain, no doubt, as beautiful. Every tenet proved; every principle of every sect consistent, uniform, and admitted. Stoics! Platonists! Epicureans! Academicians! O! you have made a shrewd guess!"

"I talk not of their agreement," said I, "but

only of the genius and eloquence with which they are recommended."

"Let shallow idlers take delight in this, if they please," said he. "My object was truth, and I could not find it; and though a tolerably honest man when I sat down to it, when I rose up, like Brutus I was ready to exclaim, 'Oh! Virtue, thou art but a name!'"

Here Mr. Yawn looked sourer than ever; so that I was almost afraid to continue the conversation. At length, thinking myself safer than with history, divinity, or philosophy, I ventured to ask if he did not, at least, love the Muses.

"Yes!" he said, "as I once loved women, till I found them false. Their glowing songs on the actions and passions of men, their heroes, their battles, their sufferings, their victories, are all exaggerations of virtue. They are all

'Faultless monsters which the world ne'er saw.'

Never was poor human nature so burlesqued. 'Incredulus odi.' Then if you come to other natures, and send me to Milton: was there ever such a failure? But so indeed it ought to be, as a punishment for the presumptuous, the almost blasphemous attempt, to give action and discourse to the Almighty, and to turn angels into generals and soldiers. So much for Epic: and for Elegy, what is it but a whine? what is more drivelling than Pastoral,

or more provokingly false than Descriptive? How have I hated green bowers and hills, and dancing in chequered shades, when I have returned from them with my feet wet, and my hair dripping! how hated in verse, the glow of the sun which in England I never see! As for the Spring, and propitious May, and Favonius, and so forth, what are they but mist and vapour? As for Favonius, I should be glad to hear what his most glowing panegyrist would say to him in a high equinoctial; and for the east wind, the mere name shivers my marrow. You will tell me to take my eclogues to Italy. It is a long journey; but what should I go for, except to be scorched there by too much sun, or if I find shade, to be stung by snakes, or slimed all over by lizards?"

Here my poor friend interrupted himself by a groan proceeding from his gout; which I was almost glad to hear, as it in some measure accounted for the splenetic treasons he had been uttering, and which I saw it would be useless to attempt to refute. I could not help, however, observing, that it was well for poetry, and indeed for literature in general, that he did not indulge in criticism; which, by the way, I said, must have formed at least one source of literary pleasure, though so many had failed.

“ No ! Sir,” he replied, “ I was here equally unfortunate.

“ ‘ Critics I saw, that other names deface,
And fix their own with labour in their place.
Their own, like others, soon their place resign’d,
Or disappear’d, and left the first behind.’

“ This is pretty much the account of the noble science of criticism : for noble it is in itself :—but altogether ‘ marred in the bringing up.’ You are right in thinking it might have been a source of literary pleasure ; and it only wanted liberality to be so. But when you see how much ingenuity and learning are thrown away upon the abuse of criticism, from personal vanity, prejudice, or ill-nature, from a barking, discontented disposition like my own, who can enjoy the feast set before him ? Is it not lamentable that such a man as Warburton should defile this pure stream with such cart-loads of rubbish, as he has thrown into it ; and that his abominable insolence, jealousy and ill-will to those he undertakes to judge, should destroy the whole charm which his stores might have shed over their productions. His notes are often Billingsgate, instead of what they ought to have been, the water of Helicon. Can we say much better of Johnson, with all his grandeur, equally prejudiced and therefore equally unjust ?

As to the periodical critics, were their fairness equal to their abilities, they might rival Apollo in their power, both of enlightening and pleasing. As it is, enlisted under particular banners, and fettered by prejudice as much as their predecessors, what gratification can a mind really and liberally seeking truth expect to derive from them? Some of them are scholars, ripe and good ones; some, themselves considerable authors. Even about these there are clouds; but to many others, of a lower order, we may apply a character long since given by a man far more capable than I of judging: 'They are like brokers, who, having no stock of their own, wish to turn a penny by the wares of others *.' "

Having made no inconsiderable exertion in this conversation, I found my hipped friend relapsing into apathy, and was about to take my leave, when, on rising, I saw the "Black Dwarf" of Sir Walter lying open upon the table, and could not resist hazarding the observations thus prompted.

"O! ho!" said I, "there is at least one class of reading which can delight you still! Nor am I surprised. The dear and ever delightful, though delusive Romance maintains all its rights, I see, over old and young. This at least you will not exclude from the power it has always had to please

* Sir William Temple.

and excite, whatever our temper of mind or cause for disgust."

"And do you," said he, "call Scott a writer of Romance? Did I so consider him, I would not read him; for Romance, whatever it may be to children, is to men mere nonsense. But Sir Walter is too natural for a Romance writer. His characters are real portraits; his descriptions, his situations, his language, his manners, his every scene and sentiment, however extraordinary, are realities: they are the life itself, and as such, may be enjoyed by the driest philosopher, as well as by the warmest imagination. He is the Shakspeare of our times; and as well might you call Shakspeare's scenes (those close pictures of nature,) romances as the works of Sir Walter. In truth, speaking for myself, I never had much imagination. I never could enter into allegories, and therefore could not relish Spenser; but as to black knights, and tourneys, and enchantments, giants, and distressed damsels, they were always to me almost insulting to the understanding. To be sure, there was a time when ghosts, or preternatural interventions, tolerably authenticated, had something like attraction. But like everything else, that too is gone, and

" ' E'en the last lingering fiction of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again.' "

“In truth, Sir, as you unfortunately see, I am left in mind, as well as body, an isolated, desolate old man, without even the power of thought for my companion, or a comfort to me in my distress.”

He said no more, but threw himself all his length on the sofa, and fell into a dreary silence. Barwis shortly afterwards came in, and I left him, not a little saddened, to think how much of apparently good mind had been overthrown by morbid sensibility.

Soon after, I quitted Bath.

SECTION XXV.

FIELDING MEETS WITH A NABOB VERY UNLIKE
OTHER NABOBS.

“ This rock and these desmesnes have been my world
Where I have lived at honest freedom.”

CYMBELINE.

It is seldom that a place like Bath, though in the wane of its glory, does not bring the most heterogeneous people acquainted ; much more does it frequently throw together persons who have formerly known, and perhaps liked one another, but whom the course of time and events have long separated. I ought not, therefore, to have been so surprised as I was to meet an old college friend, and almost chum (but that chums no longer existed,) in the person of Arthur Lovegrove, of whom I will say nothing, because he will speak for himself. Neither of us was very old, but he had the advantage in rubicund health, and a placidity of countenance, such as I felt I could not boast. It was ten years since we had seen one another, and our mutual

gratulations were in proportion. "Lovegrove!" "Fielding!" echoed from one side of the street to the other.

"O! qui complexus, et gaudia quanta fuerunt."

Our pleasure, however, did not prevent him from introducing me to a companion he was walking with, by the name of Freeman, a man of a grave and composed, yet cheerful and benevolent aspect, such as no person could pass by with indifference. I mention it the rather, because it led to an acquaintance that very day which added greatly to my own stock of content. In fact, Lovegrove, whom I pressed much to dine with me, to talk over old stories, having declined, on account of an engagement to Mr. Freeman at his house a few miles from Bath, that gentleman, seeing our pleasure at meeting, invited me so courteously and heartily to accompany my friend, that, according to my principle of action, I promised to comply. Mr. Freeman, from natural good breeding, presently left us alone, and I could not help immediately observing, how much I was struck with the air of dignified reflection and benevolence combined, which seemed to belong to him.

"You have hit it exactly," said Lovegrove, "for you could not have given a plainer epitome of his character, which is not a common one, I assure you."

This of course produced inquiries as to the who, and the what, upon both which Lovegrove gave me all satisfaction.

“Do not, however,” said he, “raise your expectations too high; for in truth, he is the plainest and most unsophisticated of mortals, but extraordinary in this, that though he is not an inconsiderable Nabob, the acquisition of riches to which he was not born, has not been able to spoil him.”

“This is what I like,” replied I, “and a rare character, such as a man might study; pray go on.”

“Why, strange to say,” observed Lovegrove, “though he has passed the best years of his life in the very hot-bed of politics and fortune-hunting, in India, he has retained all the simplicity of his earliest youth, as it existed under his father’s roof, not a proud one, where we are to dine to-day.”

“Good,” said I; “you make me long to be there. His father then was ——”

“A gentleman farmer,” continued Lovegrove, “neither more nor less; and he was educated at a school within a stone’s throw of his paternal house. Not a very fertile soil, you will say, for the Indian fruit he reaped, but which produced, and preserved, I imagine, those strong traits of character, which Hailybury or Addiscomb would have dissipated. At seventeen, after balancing

between his father's occupation and the offer of a writership, he chose the latter. Though his tastes and habits were all of the simplest, he had some ambition and also talents for business, which he turned so well to account, that, seconded by a very favourable conjunction of affairs, he acquired abroad both reputation and wealth. Providence, however, to try him, took from him what wealth could not replace: a wife, and a child on whom his chief happiness rested."

"I am to rank him, then, among the unhappy," said I.

"Not so; for equanimity and resignation saved him. His natural love of virtue, and veneration, as he said, for the fatherly hand that smote him, produced the most unmixed submission; and he felt the truth of the consoling sentiment, that it is good for us to be afflicted. He returned home with a constitution rather broken; but being rich, and not yet old, he might have taken a leading station in the world, if he had pleased."

"And did he not please?"

"Why, at first it looked like it. His house was in Berkeley-square; he had a villa at Hampton-court; he was often at Brighton; and he visited Paris."

"And I suppose enjoyed it all," observed I.

"Strange to say, No! Discharged from the re-

gular occupation of business; still dwelling on his family losses; averse to politics; unknown to, and careless of, the ostentations of society, he was disappointed in his expectations from that of London. His few Indian associates, who had all the mania of the *nouveaux riches*, were not to his taste. They sought to make themselves names by titles, parliamentary influence, magnificence, luxury. He had no vanities of this kind; indeed, no vanity at all. But he had an absorbing pleasure in early recollections. The quiet home which gave him birth, and the neighbouring school where he was bred—the happiness of his childhood, and the scenes of it, which he had never forgotten—these absolutely possessed, absorbed him, and left him no rest. The brilliancy of the life he might have led, had not any charms for him. He almost sighed over the recollection of Littlecote, as Goldsmith did over Auburn; and, in fact, twice came down here upon a half-concocted plan of making a settlement on the spot. His father's dwelling had remained *in statu quo*, but had been sold by his mother, with his consent. It was small, old, and inconvenient; yet he looked wistfully at it, and still more at its formal gardens, bordering on the play-ground of the school. In his first visit he despaired of its being fit for him, yet was angry with himself for thinking so. In the second his

anger ceased, for he resolved to repurchase it. He had not, in the interval, been more reconciled to the splendour he commanded in town, a society so new, and scenes so little congenial to his heart.

“ In tropical regions, under burning suns, and plunged in a labyrinth of transactions, public and private, his memory and imagination had feasted, had revelled, on the indelible picture of the spot where he had been cradled. Its verdant fields, its orchards and shades, made far more seducing from their contrast to the clime he was in, haunted him in the midst of the courts and magnificence of the East. In short, though, like a Swiss soldier, he performed all his duties well, like the same Swiss he had the *maladie du pays*. This actually shortened his stay abroad, where he might have accumulated still greater wealth; and he returned with a secret longing, not only for his early home, but his early habits of life. This is the strange part of his history; for, not content with the same house and the same fields which nursed him in infancy, he refused to enlarge or make them more adequate to his present station, because, he said, it would destroy the enchantment of his dreams of the past.”

“ This is the most extraordinary tale I ever heard,” said I, “ and almost defies romance (that dear deluder!) to believe it. I suppose, however, his excursions to his natal den were only tempo-

rary and of short duration, and that Berkeley-square and Hampton-court have their proper share of him : in that case, this fondness for his cradle, in the old Indian, is not so surprising."

" We shall soon see," returned Lovegrove, " and you may judge for yourself. Meantime you are wrong in your notion of such equivocal constancy ; for Hampton-court, though a superb villa, is given up for Littlecote, and Berkeley-square is shut up for two-thirds of the year."

Here we separated, to make preparations for Mr. Freeman's dinner ; and having called for Lovegrove, we set off for Littlecote, which he had much kindled my curiosity to see.

The house certainly partook little of the air of a nabob's residence. It was of exceedingly old brick, which had been red ; high roofs and gables ; the upper windows casements ; the lower sashed, but with exceeding small panes ; well kept, however, and showing marks of shelter and neatness, especially in the grounds ; upon the whole, much comfort though little show.

We found the owner in a path of velvet turf, between two hedges of blooming May, which his father had planted, and he had worshipped as a lad, and which to have found preserved was worth, he said, ten thousand pounds. He had often dreamed of them in the palaces of Rajahs. One

of its present charms had been created by himself; for the paling, that on one side bounded the walk, was the only separation between that and the play-ground of the school; and in this he had made an aperture, through which he could, at will, perceive the young population at their sports. This was so pleasant to him, that he felicitated himself on the establishment having survived so many years the vicissitudes and changes which had, during his absence, altered the fate of so many kingdoms and venerable institutions. His recollections, therefore, were not visited, like those of the poet of memory, in that most pleasing of his pleasing compositions. The school's porch was not "*lone*, nor gray with "*reverend mosses*;" the bell was not "*mute*," nor was the shout

"Unheard that rent the noon-tide air;"

but all was gay, and peopled with life and youth and jollity, made still more attractive to Freeman from the circumstance, that he himself had often played with the fathers of many of the present revellers on that very spot*.

* "The school's lone porch, with reverend mosses gray,
Just tells the pensive pilgrim where it lay;
Mute is the bell that rang at peep of dawn,
Quickening my truaut feet across the lawn;
Unheard the shout that rent the noon-tide air,
When the slow dial gave a pause to care."

These very pretty lines ought not to be meddled with; but if

Freeman and Lovegrove being particular allies, as might be expected, I was welcomed with great heartiness by the former, whom I examined as closely as I could, good breeding permitting. He gave me no idea of an embrowned Indian, accustomed to contemplate the musnud of sovereigns, or any glitter whatever. Plain manners, plain habits, and great tranquillity of countenance, without either care or carelessness, but much thought, had been my first impressions. Natural hilarity and *bonhomie* now succeeded; yet it was easy to see that there was a mixture of serious recollections with his cheerfulness, which perhaps only made it more valuable. In a word, though nature had intended him to be lively, time and events had made him pensive; and I soon began to think that his choice of life was not so surprising.

Lovegrove, whether to please me or himself, drew him out, which was not difficult, by turning the conversation on the place in its earliest days.

“I have a peculiar pleasure,” said he, “in thinking there is scarce a particle of it changed; and indoors, even some of the principal furniture remains the same. I sleep in the very bed of my father and mother, where, as a child, I used every morn-

Mr. Rogers could make abandonment so pleasing, it is almost a pity that his pencil had not pictured the enjoyments of a prosperous, rather than the desolation of a ruined school.

ing to ask their blessing. Out of doors the difference is imperceptible, except that the sweet-briars which border the walk we are in, and were planted by myself before I went to India, are from slender shoots grown into an impenetrable hedge. The flowers, also, we see, are so exactly in the same places, and of the same sorts, as those I left, that I could almost think they were the identical plants I used to water of an evening, while my mother strolled up and down this very turf, pleased with the air, pleased with her knitting, and pleased with me."

"God preserve the simpleton!" thought I, "how he would be laughed at in Berkeley-square, if this were known!"

"This feeling," observed Lovegrove, "is, I can imagine, very sweet to you, and perhaps did not belong to the Hampton Court villa."

"That was a more beautiful place," replied the Indian, "but had not those magical associations which can turn even ugliness into beauty."

"The world will wonder at you, Mr. Freeman," said I.

"It would, indeed," returned he, "if it knew all. There is an old gate in the school-yard, near us, on which my name is carved. No antiquary ever pored over a Roman inscription with more delight than I do, even now, when I visit it—which

is at least once a-week. But the brook which lies a little farther off, where I fished, as I hoped, for trout, though I caught nothing but dace—that, and the blacksmith's shop at the end of the village,—”

“ Blacksmith's shop !” exclaimed Lovegrove.

“ Yes ! one of the most important features in the amusements of a country school-boy. We there almost learned to make the horse-shoes ; heard all the gossip of the vicinage ; and in a winter evening, after school, found more cheerfulness, light and warmth there, than all the houses of Littlecote could supply. Do not, therefore, look down upon it : it affords treasures of memory, which Hampton Court, Palace and all, cannot equal.”

“ If you were not yet too young,” observed Lovegrove, “ to have any pretence to renounce the businesses of life (and, with your fortune, I should say its duties,) I should not be surprised at this turn of yours. But from the example of others, after the active excitements of your career, to sober down into what would be called by almost everybody this common-place vegetative life, has often moved my wonder. That *I* may be said to enter into it (*I*, as idle as ‘ a Carle’ as the beggar Edie Ocheltree himself,) that *I*, who never had a career, should understand and even approve it, is not surprising. But I warrant you, early recollections of

mothers knitting stockings, and boys making horse-shoes, form no part of the pleasures of your neighbours in May-Fair."

"Perhaps not," replied Mr. Freeman; "perhaps I may be despised for it by persons who understand and certainly practise so much better what are called the refinements of life. Observe, I do not blame these refinements, nor the arbiters of elegance for resolving everything into present feelings, and forgetting all that are past. If they are happier by doing so, they are wise in adopting that course. But as all are not of that temperament, they cannot on their part blame those who choose a different road, though a *private* one of their own. The daring up-hill traveller, forcing his way through a tumultuous throng, cannot, perhaps ought not, to look behind him. Probably it would retard his progress, and then he would be mortified. But others, again, may find it pleasant to rest awhile in their journey; and tired of the heat and struggle, though successful, which they have gone through, may look back, perhaps wistfully, upon the cool, and pleasant, the safe and sheltered spot from which they started. They may even think that spot still looks so seducing, calm, and verdant, compared with the turmoil they have still to encounter, that they would not be sorry to quit the ground they have won, and return to ease, humi-

lity, and happiness. There are some fine lines upon this, which in this very spot, under this very tree, when a schoolboy, and I had retired from the roar of the play-ground, used to delight me.

“ ‘ The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honey’d spring,
And float amid the liquid noon ;
Some lightly o’er the the current skim,
Some show their gaily gilded trim,
Quick glancing to the sun.
In contemplation’s sober eye,
Such is the race of man ;
And they that creep, and they that fly,
Shall end where they began *.’ ”

“ Bravely quoted, and bravely spoken,” cried Lovegrove, glad to find such an echo to his own sentiments ; “ and not the less observable because proved by your practice ; for I own I thought this rage for a contracted, though paternal domain, this incense to the memory of juvenile pleasures, would soon pass away, like a summer cloud dissipated by the sun. I think, therefore, you can afford to let your brother Indians laugh at you ; though I confess, after your busy life, I thought that a fit of spleen would have sent you to the watering-places, or again to Paris.”

“ It was because I had tried that course and found no benefit, owing to the total want of the asso-

* Gray.

ciations I find here, that this was my chosen camp. I was not one of those who, as has been lively described, ‘are compelled to drive about the world with languid countenances, and live on the miserable charity of public amusement*.’ I had no state family mansion to keep up, and little sense of the pleasure a brother Indian had, in being able to order his master of the horse to bring out ‘more Phaetons.’ I was not even a lover of curry or pepper-pot; and the taste of some of my former colleagues to force themselves, through their riches, into the society of their superiors, who swallowed their dinners and laughed at their vanity—this revolted me. I was not sure I should be happy here; but I find I am; thanks chiefly, I believe, to a reflective temper and a habit of thought, which, by way of occupation alone, is a habit worth all the pleasures that gold can procure.”

“You shall be my great Apollo,” said Lovegrove, again agreeing with him. “I now see the reason of your long and solitary walks and rides, which have sometimes made me jealous.”

“It is true,” rejoined Mr. Freeman, “I love the country generally, because it prompts reflections more satisfying than those we can make in towns. Walton would never have been the de-

* Keate.

lightful man he was, but for his country walks. I particularly love this region, not merely because of its beauty, but from having been the cradle of my youth. Here are sycamores, old acquaintances, whose very leaves, with their glowing red stems, look gladness and health. But when I add the same of every tree and bush around me, and that every babbling brook in the neighbourhood seems a long separated friend, I assure you my satisfaction is perfect; and though I do not dislike London, I have no need of it to make me happy."

"Yet for you Indians," said Lovegrove, "I should be in not a little fear for the climate."

"To be sure," returned he, "the English climate itself is not favourable to an Indian, but my windows here, are at least, all to the south, or south-east. This in spring and advanced autumn is almost happiness in itself. My first visiter of a morning is the sun; and he stays all day. And when (as sometimes in summer) he grows annoying, like the rest of the world, who drop a friend they are tired of, I turn my back upon him, and seek what I want elsewhere."

Here our lucubrations were disturbed, not unpleasantly, by a summons to dinner; at which, though as to viands, as excellent as possible, there

was in the material a display of neatness rather than wealth. There was nothing so costly as the massive old sideboard of the well-descended Blythfield. The liveries of the servants also were of the plainest ;—which Lovegrove afterwards told me was upon principle.

“ For why,” said Freeman once to him, “ should I parade before all the world, my rise from nothing by what would be universally set down to upstart vanity ? My father had no liveries at all. A decent, and, by the way,” said he, laughing, “ a very pretty maid-servant, who is now at the head of my house, was all he had to wait upon his dinner. I have men merely because they are useful.”

This was, I thought, true philosophy. Our dinner and discourse after it were as pleasant as three rational persons (of whom I began to think myself one,) could make it; and the evening being warm, we adjourned to our coffee, under a spreading mulberry-tree, which always filled our host, he said, with boyish recollections.

We then strolled down an avenue of walnuts, where, assisted by a gardener, still in existence, and who appeared like his brother, Freeman had revelled at sixteen, in threshing for the fruit.

When we complimented him upon possessing this

fund of pleasure from memory, he said, it was astonishing even to himself that it did not wear out ; but he accounted for it from his peculiar situation, in having lost, by a dispensation from Heaven, to which it was his duty to submit, all that he most valued upon earth.

“ I have no doubt it is this,” he said, “ that makes abstraction from the world even pleasant to me. Mind, I have no spleen against that world ; but its chief interests are gone with those who have been taken from me ; no blame, therefore, to others who, more fortunate, can continue in the race. Such, however, is the will of Heaven, and I endeavour to think, as I ought, only on the comparative blessings I have left. My health is restored ; my grief assuaged ; my ambition extinguished. I have failed in some things, but have succeeded in more ; for I have had much more success than disappointment. Few can say this : let me, therefore, bless God till I am summoned ; and then depart, as I humbly hope I shall, in peace.”

The sobriety and seriousness which, as I have said, I thought was the foundation of Freeman’s cheerfulness, showed themselves pleasingly in this speech. I have remembered it ever since, and am the better for it at this moment ; for how little

do we any of us know how soon the summons may come, and still less, whether, according to the wish of this good man, we may be allowed to depart in peace !

SECTION XXVI.

“Nay, do not think I flatter ;
For what advancement can I hope from thee,
Who no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee?” HAMLET.

THE dinner, the scene, and, above all, the conversation at Littlecote, made the few hours I passed there, perhaps the very pleasantest in all my tour ; and I could not help, as we returned home, thanking Lovegrove heartily for what he had procured me.

“Our landlord’s views of life,” said he, “have gone far to confirm my own. For when I have sometimes reproached myself for my want of courage to encounter an active career, and beheld the career of others, who, after much trouble, and painful vicissitudes, have returned to die at home, I have thought it might perhaps be better for the world in general, if they were always sure of ending, like Freeman, “exactly where they began.” I am afraid, however, I was impolitic in taking

you to Littlecote, before you had passed the day with me, which you promised. But recollect, my home is but a bachelor's, and a cottage, and you will have nothing but cottage fare, such as Horace offered to his friend Torquatus :

“ ‘ *Modica olus omne patella.* ’ ”

To this I answered, in the words of the same Horace—

“ ‘ *Nil ego contulerim jucundo sanus amico.* ’ ”

“ And yet Horace was as fond of good eating as any Apicius of London or Paris. But my good friend, you must be not a little changed since our *friande* Christ Church suppers, if by your ‘*olus omne*’ you mean a dish of herbs ; which, to tell you the truth, from your rotundity, as well as placidity of countenance, I do not guess to have been your usual entertainment since we parted.”

Then taking out my tablets, I said, “ I shall certainly set you down among the happy, in the journal I told you I was keeping ; and how you are so, living, as you say, in a cottage, though, to my knowledge, without a spark of romance about you (for I believe you have not even been in love,) I shall feel edified in knowing.”

“ My life and adventures,” returned he, “ are the most common-place that ever were put together ; not a single piece of good or bad fortune to

show for all the years I have lived. Yet I do not deny that you are right in your conjecture ; and with you I believe my rotundity arises very much from my placidity ; both which you are pleased to notice. In a word, I have been always, or generally, as happy as when you used to say, at college, nothing could put me out."

" And this," said I, " is ' better than an estate of eight thousand a year ;' as an acquaintance I have made here sufficiently demonstrates. Yet without meaning to be impertinent, I believe, from what I have heard of you in the world, you have not even aspired to increase your paternal fortune ; and with your abilities I should like to know why."

" You have been rightly informed," he replied, " as will, I fear, be proved to you by my dinner to-morrow."

He then gave me some particulars of his very unmarked, but happy life, since we parted as young men : by which it was quite clear that he had no reason to repent preferring the cool sequestered vale he had chosen, to mounting the steep and craggy heights, where so many adventurous people have been dashed to pieces. At college he was universally popular ; yet, though feelingly alive to the politer parts of learning, distinguished chiefly for a quiet cheerfulness, which in the little rubs and mortifications which will sometimes ruffle even

an undergraduate, never abandoned him. His habits were, for a young man, rather retired, but more for the peace it gave him, than from aversion to company—once among whom, he was as lively as the liveliest. He had pleasantry, but always so free from malignity, and managed with so much tact, that the object of it was among the first to be pleased. He therefore shone in society, but would quit the merriest, free from excitement, and plunge into solitary study, with equal if not higher satisfaction. This was his picture at college; and I should think from his account it had belonged to him ever since. The defect in his character (if it was a defect) was the want of energy, which prevented him from embracing any arduous profession. And yet, as he said himself, it was wonderful that he had not become a man of ambition, or at least of business.

He showed me, in a visit I afterwards made him, whole volumes of political and historical collections, formed by himself, with as much industry as if he had been designed for a cabinet minister. In his travels abroad, his views were quite as statistical as classical, and his dreams of the future as indicative of activity, as of the calm which was afterwards his choice. But it is the character of youth to possess in idea everything which it only imagines; perhaps a more delightful possession

than many realities. Thus, in some letters he allowed me to see, written from Bagnières de Bigorre, when only twenty years of age, he describes his dreams of the world, but always in the midst of the wildest and most sequestered scenery.

“ Every evening,” said he, “ at a given hour, I traverse the beautiful walk, that overhangs the river, called after a Duchess of Bourbon, who planted it ; and here I think of many a scene that is past, and many a project to come ; power and place among them. In these dreams I wander till darkness surprises me, and ‘ sheds a browner horror o’er the woods.’ ”

This half-political, half-poetical spirit was afterwards transplanted by family interest to the elbow of one of the Ministers, with whom he officiated as secretary for a twelvemonth ; but at the end of that time he quitted his patron, and the whole walk of active ambition. When I expressed surprise at this, especially as his chief, he said, was quite satisfied with him,—

“ Yes ! ” he observed, “ satisfied as I am with my servant, who is an excellent machine. I was civilly treated ; I was punctual in attendance, did as I was bid, and gave no offence : nay, once or twice was asked to an official dinner, where I was expected to eat, listen, and say nothing. But, except officially, I had not the honour of the great

man's attention or conversation, though, in truth, he had risen from no greater beginnings than myself. Out of office I was totally unnoticed."

"Perhaps," said I, "he was one of those who

'Hate for arts that taught themselves to rise.'

"I know not how that was," replied he, "nor was I angry; but as I had promised myself a different sort of reception from him, I did not care to continue in such cold embraces, and desired to quit. For this I was thought a fool by my friends, but not by myself, if only because I could now meet his coach without caring who was in it. In truth, I had not the ambition of many who, from being small people themselves, think that to be about the great is all-in-all. Thus I resigned my office to a young aspirant, who was in his glory at being allowed to direct his patron's letters."

"I honour you," said I, "for your independence in all this, but am not quite so sure of your prudence. Who knows to what you might have risen, had you continued."

"Your observation," said he, "is only natural; but all depends upon character. Mine had anything but that sort of turbulent activity that loves excitement; nay, cannot do without it. I had not even the excitement of vanity;—which, while it lasts, and the notice of great people is new, seems, and, indeed, is to many, for the time being, happiness

sufficient. But when the supposed grandeur, the halo that surrounds people of power, and, still more, people of fashion, becomes familiar, or is past away, there is nothing left but the same vacuity that attends a commonplace intercourse, as far as anything but superior intellect is concerned. It, indeed, is inconceivable how soon the *mere* dazzle of greatness, *qua* greatness, loses its brilliancy, and how soon high and low, in all respects but *mind*, are brought to a level. As for my patron, as you call him, I would not, I assure you, have exchanged situations with him."

"That, I own, is wonderful," said I; "but you no doubt had a reason."

"The sword of Damocles," returned he.

"O! now I understand you."

"It hung perpetually over him: he could not look up or down, on one side or the other, but it was pointed full at his heart. In fact, he loved power, but was ever in fear of losing it. The word revolution gave him the spleen; the huzza of a mob quailed his nerves; a popular address broke his sleep; and if you had seen his anxiety as to the result of a debate, you would not wonder at my opinions. I mean not to say that all this might not have charms for some. They had none for me. Others love troubled waters, I the clear stream. I ever loved those lines of Gay to Pope,

on the scenes he was condemned to hate, and to live in:—

‘ You, who the sweets of rural life have known,
Despise th’ ungrateful hurry of the town ;
In Windsor groves your easy hours employ,
And, undisturb’d, yourself and muse enjoy.
But I, who ne’er was bless’d by fortune’s hand,
Nor brighten’d ploughshares in paternal land
Long in the noisy town have been immur’d,
Respir’d its smoke, and all its cares endur’d ;
Where news and politics divide mankind,
And schemes of state involve th’ uneasy mind.’

I was taught the truth and justice of these lines by experience. Afterwards they were never out of my memory ; and I only wonder how I came to breathe the official atmosphere so long as I did.”

“ They are tempting lines, indeed,” said I, “ and at your age would have made me mad, too.”

I was going to compliment him again upon his philosophy, but he denied it to be such ; saying, there was no more in it than in the case of a man who, being always ill in a coach, preferred travelling on foot.

“ I am certainly,” continued he, “ not one of those to whom a coach is necessary in their passage through life. My enjoyments are cheap, for they are easily obtained.”

“ Pray let me know them,” said I.

“ You will laugh, perhaps, when I tell you, that

the most sensual is fine weather. I am, indeed, like the eccentric, but, in this, most rational Duchess of Queensbury, who tells Lady Suffolk, ‘When the weather is fair, I ride a great deal; when bad, I sit still, and endeavour to paint sunshine.’”

“But your evenings!” said I. “No wife! no company! A green old bachelor!”

“The most independent of all,” answered he. “When, for example, I have shut my door, which encloses a principality of some fifteen feet square; my candles lighted, and my fire burning, if winter; or my window open, and letting in the honeysuckle, if summer; prepared to moralize on all I have seen, heard, or read in the day, *totus in hoc*, and without a thought foreign to what I am about, —who happier than myself?”

“Not Secretary Damocles, I will answer for it,” said I; and here, having set him down at his door, we parted.

SECTION XXVII.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

“ Here we wander in illusions.”

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

LOVEGROVE, from his age, appeared certainly to be no common character ; for I could detect nothing in him to make me think that he did not understand himself, or suppose he would not persevere in the course of life he had chosen. His wants were few, and his passions not high. His great, and almost only enjoyments were books, fine weather, and conversation,—for the former of which he was celebrated ; and for the last, the place he had chosen for his sojourn gave him ample opportunities, from the succession of good company which it generally afforded.

I went much earlier to him than his dinner-hour warranted, and found his house simple but elegant ; which was the character of himself and everything about him.

A conversation I had with him, in an alcove of

his own construction, rather struck me. The alcove faced the east; which not suiting my notions of comfort in an English climate, I observed upon it.

“ You would be right,” he said, “ if I had not other seats; but this is a noon-tide or evening recess; and even in early morning, at least in spring and autumn, has its advantages in warmth and cheerfulness, as it has in shelter and coolness at noon. As to coolness, I have a little philosophy of my own upon it, in which I don’t know whether you will agree with me, thinking it, perhaps, too far-fetched and refined.”

“ And pray what may it be? for I own I never thought of coolness philosophically, except with a view to cooling my wine.”

“ That is a good view of it, too”, said he; “ but, in short, I consider warmth and coolness as powerful instruments of sensual pleasure; and that sensual pleasure which is most mixed with mind, is always, with me, far preferable to others.”

“ Agreed,” said I; “ but who ever heard of coolness being a mental enjoyment?”

“ My comparative seclusion of life,” he replied, “ has perhaps prompted notions, if not original, at least unusual. Among these is an opinion I have, that coolness and shade, during hot weather, afford an enjoyment certainly more romantic, and, if I may say so, more sentimental and elegant, than the

mere warmth necessary to thaw one's faculties in winter before one can think. The east seems absolutely mechanical, in comparison. A Laplander would not understand this, because his intellect is almost as frozen as his body; but take a Frenchman on the banks of the Loire; or an Italian exclaiming with the poet—

‘ O ! qui me gelidis in vallibus Hæmi,

Sistat et ingenti ramorum protegat umbrâ ;’

and see the difference of the enjoyment. As both are sensual, I have asked myself—why is this? and I have only solved the question by feeling that one is mixed up with mind more than the other. Warmth after frost is a mere relief to the corporeal sense; shade and coolness soothe the imagination as well as the body. They seem more to inspire us with a love of Nature, and to give her, as it were, a personification—the personification of a gentle, kindly, and elegant mistress.”

“ Upon my word,” said I, amused, but pleased with this rhapsody, “ your mistress is much obliged to you, and I, too; for I own, if this is the philosophy of coolness, I never had thought of it. It is a pity you had not lived with Virgil, to have given him so fit a supplement to his charming lines.”

“ At any rate, then,” continued he, “ give an

eastern aspect its due, as you would the devil ; for while in the mornings it enables us to adore the delightful sun, it makes a still more delightful noon-tide bower, when we pant for shelter from his too-powerful beams."

I am not surprised, thought I to myself, that my old college chum could not drive a quill in Downing-street.

We now renewed the conversation of the evening before.

" I was thinking," said he, " how tame and flat my life must appear to you, who have revelled all your last years in scenes so different."

" Indeed," I answered, " I give myself no such airs ; though I perhaps should not, myself, be able to imitate you ; having never been able to create employment for myself."

" I am not altogether reduced to that," returned he ; " for you perhaps don't know that I have the immense labour and responsibility of being an ecclesiastic chancellor. It is a small employment, which just suits me. It fills up, without overburthening, some of my hours ; and while it ekes out my moderate fortune, it gives me some respectability in a pleasant and well-educated circle, which is sometimes enlarged by the polished visitors of the place. We hear and talk of the

world with as much interest as it deserves ; and he who does more, must blame himself if he is made unhappy by it."

"Very sententious," said I, "and a good account of life in a dove-cote, like that of those pigeons we see yonder."

"Yet the pigeons," returned he, "are, you see, sleek, healthy, and even lively, though domesticated. However, as this seems not to your taste, I will at dinner introduce you to a man, whose whole life has been a series of excitements, which he still fosters, though on the borders of his grand climacteric. Indeed, he is never satisfied, even now, without them."

"But is he with them?" I asked.

"I wish I could tell," returned Lovegrove, "for it has cost him sometimes dear ; particularly *la belle passion* in his youth."

Upon my asking the meaning of this, Lovegrove went on to tell me some anecdotes of his friend, Mr. Beauvoir, (for that was his name,) which very much interested my curiosity.

"He is a man," said Lovegrove, "of fine mind ; too fine, some might say, for happiness ; but *he* does not think so. He has been, and is still, liable to the strongest impressions, which, while they last, render him always an enthusiast. He is of course sensitive, and therefore uncertain, if not

changeable ;—only, however, in his tastes, not as to his opinions or friends.”

“ But how,” said I, “ as to his mistresses ; for, as you mentioned the *belle passion* with such emphasis, we are to believe, I suppose, there have been such persons in his history.”

“ There have ; and the headlong violence with which he once plunged into the passion, which had nearly proved fatal to him, contrasted with his complete and sudden recovery, would not be an unimportant feature, to a philosopher of human nature, in the history of love.”

“ God bless me !” said I, “ it is but a few years since I was myself just such a philosopher, and almost as deeply plunged.”

Lovegrove smiled, and went on to inform me, that in early youth Beauvoir had been so struck with a young person of his own rank, whose beauty and worth were (or he thought they were) unparalleled, that his attachment amounted to distraction. For the usual difficulties attended him : his Belinda had no fortune, and he at the time very little ; so both families forbade the union, and the lady went abroad. He followed, and traversed the whole continent after her ; and once, like Sheridan, assumed (not, indeed, the coat of a hackney-coachman, but) a postillion’s jacket, only to be near and get a sight of her.

“ Such a trial, however,” continued Lovegrove,

“ was heaven in comparison with another which he really underwent. His mistress had owned a mutual feeling, but was not averse to the admiration, nay, even the addresses of others ; and as he appeared to be in the way of a young Polander, of high rank and spirit, a quarrel could not be prevented, which had nearly proved fatal to both ;—for they fought with sabres, and both fell covered with wounds. He was long in recovering, but only to lose his mistress. She had accepted the Count, whose wounds had sooner healed than his ; and such was his madness from disappointment, indignation, and disgust, that he attempted poison.”

I was shocked with this part of the story, but was too much rivetted to break the thread of it, except by asking impatiently for the result.

“ The dose was not strong enough,” said Lovegrove, “ or the laudanum was not good ; for as there was no stomach-pump in those days, had it been otherwise, he would not have got off for a week’s stupor ;—which, and a considerable struggle afterwards, in which his constitution triumphed, was all the bodily ill he suffered.”

“ But how fared the heart ?” I asked.

“ Why, most unaccountably well. For whether laudanum is a specific against love, or an object belonging to another creates in some minds indifference ; or whether his eyes opened of themselves

to a number of defects to which he had before been blind ;—certain it is that Beauvoir was as suddenly cured as he had been wounded.

“ At first he thought of flying from Paris, where he met the Countess soon after her marriage ; and though this he disdained, it was at first with fear and trembling that he saw her in a high set at an assembly of the English Ambassadors. Here however she made so poor a figure, and exhibited a dress and manners so little accordant with the grace he had formerly attributed to her, and above all was so markedly inferior to the winning elegance of the rest of the assembly, that he awaked, he said, as if from a dream. His heart no longer palpitated ; he felt neither anger, envy, nor disgust ; and, in short, wondered how he had ever loved. Finally, this was not bravado ; for he continued to meet, and even to visit his *quondam* enchantress, as if she had been the most commonplace of his acquaintance.”

“ This is an extraordinary story,” said I ; “ though not on account of the suddenness of a recovery from love ; for that I have seen, excepting the strong incidents, not usual out of a romance, of duel, wounds, and poison. You say, that even now, his animation has not abandoned him.”

“ I should think not ; for though I believe he is near sixty, at one of the balls the other night, a young and beautiful girl of high rank having dropped her

fan, he took it up, and returned it with these verses written on the leaves :—

‘ When heat fatigues, and dancing tires,
And Flavia droops with sultry fires,
Go! pleasing toy, and lend thy aid,
Revive the almost fainting maid,
Fading, failing, half expiring,
All thy softest airs requiring:
Go! pleasing, graceful, useful toy,
And give her back to love and joy.’ ”

“ Admirable !” said I, “ at-sixty. What must he have been at five-and-twenty !”

At that moment his arrival with the other guests, and the consequent mutual introductions, put an end to farther description.

Our dinner went off most successfully; for Lovegrove, with all his quietness, at times understood and practised the *Savoir Vivre* extremely well. Notwithstanding, therefore, his warning concerning cottage fare, his entertainment was *recherché*, if not sumptuous. In this, indeed, he was assisted by a friend at Court, or rather at the kitchen of York House; no less a man than Monsieur La Place, principal artiste in that celebrated resort of invalids and *bons vivans*. Through his interest and exertions, there was no want of fumets, entremets, and Johannisberg, which might have rivalled Lord R. himself.

I rallied him upon this; but all his guests agreed

that philosophical self-denial as to ambition, by no means implied self-denial in other enjoyments, particularly the pleasure of society, which every one allowed depended much upon the pleasures of the table.

Seven very agreeable and well-informed men, therefore, did justice to this maxim, by the attention they gave to its practice. There were, of course, Mr. Beauvoir; next, a very pleasant and affable, at the same time rather criticising, dignitary of the church; then a physician, with all the useful general information for which that profession are remarkable. These, with Lovegrove and myself, made five; the sixth was a gentlemanly man, not much older than Beauvoir, but without his hilarity or sensibility of countenance. Indeed, he seemed rather of a melancholy temperament; which did not, however, prevent him from paying due respect to the labours of Monsieur La Place.

Added to these, was Sir Felix Buoyant, who, though only that morning known to Lovegrove, turned out, as will be seen, by no means the least important of the party. He had, in fact, but just arrived at Bath, and having brought a letter of introduction from a literary friend in London, Lovegrove had been glad to enlist him in a party which he thought might prove agreeable to him.

After the repast, the conversation took a particu-

lar turn; for, with a view to draw out Beauvoir, Lovegrove, talking of the sources of the pleasures of imagination, proposed that we should all state as far as we could remember, what sight or sound, or other impression, had struck us most in our time; whether the impression lasted; and how long. In short, endeavouring to elicit our ideas of the *summum bonum*.

The Dean of —, who seconded this, said he would not ask for the *summum bonum* itself, because there were as many opinions as minds about it, and because the same man changed his opinion with almost every different position he might be in. The strongest and longest impression might, however, he said, go some way towards its elucidation. The proposal was agreed to, and as it was neither more nor less than an opening to the subject of happiness, it may be supposed I was all ear.

Lovegrove was appointed to conduct the order of the investigation; and to show his impartiality, he called upon his right hand neighbour, who happened to be Beauvoir, to begin; merely, he said, because he was next him.

“We expect great things from you,” said Lovegrove, “knowing your brilliant imagination, and how it gilds every thing to you, even now. What it must have been in your younger days, it will be a treat to us to hear!”

“ You would not thank me,” replied Beauvoir, “ were I to recount all the follies and exaggerations of the imagination you give me credit for. It is certain it was often so warm as to make me think myself a great fool.”

“ This is exactly what we want to know,” said Lovegrove.

“ Why I was so eager at eighteen,” replied the other, “ as to quarrel with Milton in one of his prettiest passages ; for prettiness can be applied to him as well as sublimity. He talks of fairy elves—

‘ Whose midnight revels by a forest side
Or fountain, some belated peasant sees,
Or *dreams* he sees.’

At eighteen I could not bear this ‘ *dreams* ;’ I wanted reality ; and I believe I was full thirty before, at least in a moonlight walk, I could part with the idea that such a reality might be.”

“ No doubt you found it,” said the Dean.

“ Not positively in Nature,” returned Beauvoir ; “ but something very like it in that scene, which in pursuance of our plan, I suppose I am to recount as making the strongest impression on my senses.”

“ This is what we want,” said Lovegrove.

Judge our wonder when Beauvoir gravely replied, the *Opera*.

“ Yes !” said he, “ I am not surprised at your laughter, but it is true. I was a raw youth just

entered at College, after having been insulated at Winchester; where operas were heard of, but never seen, and dancing was rather condemned as unworthy wise men and scholars, such as we voted ourselves to be, though most of us had never been out of the county of Hants. A visit, however, which I made to a gay family in London, opened my eyes and ears to sensations which let in, as it were, a new world, so rich, so dazzling, so refined,—both on the stage, and still more in the incomparable grandeur and elegance, amounting to awe, in the audience,—that to my weak and unpractised experience, nothing in point of effect, ever came near it, before or since.”

“I suppose you are particularly fond of music,” said the Dean.

“That no doubt had a great, but not the greatest share in it; but my moral impressions—”

“Moral impressions!” we all exclaimed, in downright laughter.

“Yes!” continued he, preserving his gravity. “It was by those impressions, I am sure, that I was most affected. The assemblage of rank that surrounded me; the dignified quiet preserved by them: their dress and manners, so totally different from any audience or assembly I had been used to; their very repose even when moved to applaud;—all these kindled a sort

of respect as well as pleasure which I could not account for. Then my total want of experience bred in me such a sense of my own inferiority, as enhanced all my feelings of admiration. I looked upon the inhabitants of the boxes as enthroned demi-gods, and the Macaronis in Fop's Alley (for so the place and persons were then called), as a set of enviable deities of fashion, which my poor homely breeding despaired of equalling. All this, too, was heightened to a still keener sense, by learning from my gay friends, who had initiated me, and enjoyed my booby amazement, the names of the most distinguished heroines and heroes of the day, who seemed to consider a display which had appalled me, as their mere native element. Peers and knights, whose names had sounded all over Europe, and countesses who had been celebrated in prose and verse; parliamentary orators, who had been likened to Cicero, and had thundered in debates which had often reached us at College;—all these, for the first time, moved before me, and I was only more interested from observing them in all the ease of familiar, but elegant intercourse. What an effect upon such a Cymon as I!"

"Upon my word," observed the Dean, "you have clearly explained the seeming paradox of the *moral impressions* of the Opera. I find I was wrong in my notion that it meant morality. But

you have said nothing of the stage ; I suppose you found few moral impressions there ? ”

Beauvoir laughed, but said, that what he felt there was rather the enchantment of the senses, than the influence of mind ; but that this enchantment had overpowered every other wonder that possessed him :—in which, however, he ought not to be thought singular, for that a very learned Divine of Oxford, now a Bishop, and even then not young, had said, that next to reading the tragedy in Greek, the ballet of Medea and Jason had given him the greatest *mental* pleasure he had ever enjoyed.

“ Well,” said the Dean, “ I think you have made out your case, and we will allow the Opera to have been the strongest impression of your younger feelings. But agreeably to our compact, we may now ask whether its power continued ; and if not, whether any, and what other took its place ? ”

“ Alas ! ” replied Beauvoir, “ none of equal strength ; though strange to say, having lived long enough to detect, and therefore to appreciate all the machinery, both before and behind the curtain, the enchantment of both is at length dissolved, and like a worn-out spell can charm no longer.”

“ And can you tell us why ? ”

“ I suppose, because its attraction depended upon imagination ;—as the cloud was taken for Juno by

Ixion ;—and like other pleasures of imagination, it failed with my youth.”

Here the gentleman I have described as of a melancholy complexion gave a deep sigh.

“ Let me not, however, complain,” continued Beauvoir, “ for spite of spectacles, which were a sad blow to me, and an ear-trumpet which was worse, I was full fifty years old before I found out that I was not a young man. This, though many felicitated me upon it, was in reality a misfortune. Spirits and excitement kept me up ; but in general I know no position less pleasant, I had almost said more unhappy, than what I call the twilight of life—the passage from decided youth to decided age. My twilight lasted above twenty years.”

“ There seem, however, to have been some flashes of lightning now and then, to illuminate your path,” said the Dean.

“ There certainly were,” answered Beauvoir ; “ for I own I was a disciple of some lines which struck me early in youth, and which I have never forgotten in age.”

“ Pray let us have them,” said we all.

“ They are these :—

“ O ! memory ! thou wonder-working power,
My ardent mind so cruelly pursuing,
Shall I oblivion’s icy help implore,
Or court thee, goddess, still to my undoing ?

Ah ! no ! oblivion ne'er was meant for me,
Nor prudence cold, nor cautious hesitation ;
Rather sweet fancy, smiling nymph to thee,
I gladly yield my rapt imagination.' ”

“ Molto bravo ! ” cried the Dean ; “ and I hope you will tell us how long your smiling nymph remained with you, and whither she went with your ‘ rapt imagination. ’ ”

He answered with vivacity ;

“ ‘ Over hill, over dale,
Through bush, through brier ;
Over path, over pale,
Through flood, through fire. ’ ”

In a word, I went over the Alps and Pyrenees ; and what was almost better, though at home, through the Gorge of Borrowdale, at the head of Keswick Lake ; and for ten years could never sleep but I dreamt of it. Gray had done this before me, and charmed many an hour of delightful fancy with his picture. Never were describer, and the thing described, so worthy one another. This was the strongest visual impression I think I ever felt.”

“ Except the enchantresses of the Opera,” said Lovegrove, as I thought rather maliciously.

“ O ! as to them, or the beau sexe in general,” returned Beauvoir, “ I believe the less said about them the better. I have certainly felt their power,

but agree with Diderot, that to describe a woman you must dip your pen in the rays of the rainbow, and dry your paper with powder from a butterfly's wing."

We all laughed at this sally, but none of us liked to push him on his remembrances of the beau sexe.

"You have surely seen the Rhine, as well as the Alps and the Pyrenees?" said Lovegrove.

"I have," returned he, "and was disappointed. But I saw it too late—not in the season, but in life—for I had got beyond the age of delivering my soul up to its legends, upon which much of its magic depends."

"Even your impressions then can wear out!" said the melancholy looking gentleman, whose name was Mr. Sadburn.

"Weaken, if you please, but not positively wear out; although I fear I must confess, that old age seems to have been given us for the purpose of detecting, and therefore of destroying illusion. But whether in making us wiser, it also makes us happier, I may be permitted to doubt."

"And I," echoed Mr. Sadburn, with a still deeper sigh.

"Observe, however," continued Beauvoir, (warming still with his subject) "I have been talking solely, or chiefly, of the impressions of

bodily sense; the eye, the ear, and the gratifications of taste founded upon them. Couple these with moral sense, with high associations, and the feelings of the heart, and no age which does not destroy memory can deprive them of their power."

"Good;" said the Dean; "we will all be your scholars there; and particularly my friend Sadburn here; who I hope will continue his attention to the useful lesson which I know you are giving him."

"I long to hear these moral impressions of yours, and what specific scenes gave rise to them," said Lovegrove.

"I fear you will be disappointed," answered Beauvoir, "particularly when I tell you that the one which was perhaps the most powerful, was afforded when I first took my seat in the House of Commons."

"Except with absolute greenhorns," observed the Dean, "I should not have expected that."

"Why the interest of my family," replied Beauvoir, "made me early a senator, when I was full of history, party politics, and public virtue; Greece and Rome, Thucydides, Cicero, Clarendon, Burke, Bolingbroke, and Lord Chatham. These were all at my finger ends; and I had sat up whole nights over Walpole and Pulteney. It was, there-

fore, with a beating heart that I entered the chamber where they had debated, and sat on the very seats where they had sat. With these feelings, I was also young enough to look upon the Speaker, and his authoritative voice, dress, and demeanour, as a spectacle amounting almost to the awful."

"I suppose those feelings were soon over," said the Dean.

"Not perhaps so soon as you imagine. Though they sometimes faded, they were often again excited with even fresh vigour, at least while the luminaries with whom I had the good fortune to be contemporary, were in being. One spectacle, however, (a later one,) the most august, and most intensely impressive both upon the heart and mind, that ever was presented to the eye of man, or even described 'in tale or history,' was afforded by this assembly, and created emotions which never can be forgotten."

We all eagerly asked what ?

"It was when perhaps the greatest man that Britain ever produced, the tutelary genius of Europe, as well as of his country, attended at the bar, as it were of the whole nation, to receive from their representatives their thanks and rewards, for services which no other man in history ever equalled. The warm and inimitable eloquence, with which these thanks were given, and the dignified feeling with

which they were received; the man, the services, the thousand associations, combining nothing less than the fate and fortune of empires;—made this the most moving scene I ever witnessed.”

We bowed assent to this explanation, and allowed it must have been what he called it, an august spectacle.

“It was not only grand and sublime to our mental faculties,” continued he, “it was thrilling to our hearts. There was not a man who heard or saw it, that was unaffected. Many shed tears, the tears of real patriotism, joy, and admiration; and no man, not even, I believe, the most pettifogging trader in politics, that witnessed the scene, went home from it, but with an elevation of spirit that made him prouder and happier for the events of that day.”

“And yet,” said the Dean, drily, “we have lived to see this same great person, great as he is, pursued and even pelted, by what you may indeed call a swinish multitude, whose excitements were certainly not like those you have commemorated.”

“Their rascally ingratitude,” returned Beauvoir, “will not alter the character of what I have described, nor the happiness of this most happy recollection.”

“This, then,” said, Lovegrove, “was certainly no illusion.”

“ And if it had been,” replied Beauvoir, “ I should have hugged its remembrance as I now do, like that of a delicious dream.”

“ You are happy,” said the Dean, “ not only in the number and intensity of your impressions, but in the seeming power you have of thinking without regret of their comparative cessation.”

“ I was just going to make that remark,” said Mr. Sadburn.

“ They have not ceased,” returned Beauvoir, “ though, as I have said, they may be weakened; and I have still others on which I can also dwell, though only in memory, with a delight which the new impressions of one’s advanced life can never equal. Music for example, music never to be forgotten, the music heard in one’s youth; the *ramage* of the woods, the song of the nightingale. They are still fresh in these dull ears, though long, long shut out from them. But chief let me mention a sort of excitement, both through ear and eye, which no age can obliterate; for I have still impressed on my brain, the awful thunder of the choruses of the Messiah, as they pealed through the aisles of the Abbey, at the commemoration of Handel, full thirty years ago: and I have still before me the glowing countenance of that excellent old king, my ancient master, who patronized the festival, as he stood up with reverential awe,

‘smit with the love of sacred song.’ In that, as in a thousand other instances, he was an object for imitation to all who lived under his benignant rule. I see him now as if but yesterday.”

“You have, at least, not forgotten your loyalty,” rejoined the Dean, rather moved by this tribute.

“’Tis a commodity too scarce to part with,” answered Beauvoir.

Here he seemed to have finished; and he had answered so readily to all our inquiries, that we were unwilling to push him farther. For myself, long after he had ceased, I could not help admiring the animated old man, whose eye still beamed fire, and whose age, though it had frosted his temples, had anything but chilled his heart.

He will fill a high place, thought I, in my account of happiness.

Lovegrove now called upon the Dean, who had entered so much into Beauvoir’s impressions, to tell us those that flourished most in his own memory; and, as he had been foremost in promoting the conversation, we looked for something of great interest from him. But to our surprise he disappointed us, saying, “That a clergyman, if honest, when called upon for his strongest impressions, could only give the history of sinners on their death-beds;—which would not at all suit the present occasion.” He, therefore, to our regret, begged

off. And as he looked for the time very serious, we did not like to press him.

Lovegrove, therefore, called upon Mr. Sadburn, the gentleman of the sad and serious brow, and asked if *he* had any illusions which he delighted or feared to remember? His answer, however, and what followed, deserve a section of their own.

SECTION XXVIII.

ANOTHER OLD MAN'S STORY.

“ From the tables of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records.”

HAMLET.

“ You will get little of me,” said Mr. Sadburn, in answer to Lovegrove's question, “ for I have no pleasure in remembering what I can no longer enjoy. My state, I fear, is the reverse of my honourable friend's who spoke last, and whom, I own, I envy. For, though once alive, perhaps as much as he, to the impressions he has so well described, I feel too bitterly the having survived them, to feed upon their reminiscence. I am rather like the poor prisoner of Fotheringay—

“ ‘ I sigh and lament me in vain ;
These walls can but echo my moan ;
And thought can but add to my pain,
For I think on the days that are gone.’ ”

“ In sober truth, I never was open to the pleasures of illusion, in other words, of self-deception.

I was always for reality. While I had it, I enjoyed it; and grieve that I can enjoy it no longer."

"You seem, however," said the Dean, "to have enjoyed our good landlord's venison, to say nothing of the nepenthe which you are now stopping. That, at least, is no illusion."

"The palate," returned Mr. Sadburn, "is one of the very few pleasures left to a poor *çi-devant jeune homme*; but it ill makes up for the loss of our *beaux jours*. Mine were, I own, so sweet that I dare not trust myself to recall them. In short, I am completely sensible of what is related of Walcot*, who, in his last days, when his friend asked what he could do for him, replied, 'Give me back my youth.' With youth, the sweetener of life, hope is gone; and hope is so necessary to happiness, nay, I might say, is so entirely happiness itself, that the poets, as we know, make the want of it one of the chief punishments of *hell*. Now, what hope remains to an old man? What can he embark in with any prospect of a happy, or, indeed, of any issue? 'The end crowns the work,' is a maxim the earliest learnt, and the latest parted with. Yet this is denied to old age, which has survived all hope of an end. I go into a well-stored library;—I open a volume of science;—what hope have I of time to acquire it, or to

* Peter Pindar.

profit by its use if I do? I dive into history in order to study the world! For what purpose, when I am about to quit it? If I build a house, every stone would remind me that I ought to be building my tomb. If I cultivate a beautiful garden, I feel that I am not to reap its fruit; if I admire a beautiful lady, she tells me the season of love is no more."

This conclusion of the evils attending the loss of youth, created a good deal of laughter, in which Sadburn himself joined. As soon as it was over, however, the Dean observed—

"My good friend, you live too much alone. Neither your age, nor the treatment you have received, give you a warrant to shut out the world. I say nothing of the season of love; but I, who am not yet very old, can remember you gay, among the gay; active, among the active; at the ball, the chase, the club! How did you once plunge head and ears into politics, which not only interested, but occupied your whole mind? To be sure, you may not be able now to dance at a ball as you did when you were a young man of fifty! But you might still love a fiddle, and to contemplate the happiness of those young persons whose grandmothers you admired."

"Ah! those grandmothers!" returned Sadburn: "How miserably withered do they make

me feel myself ! But the spectre of some nymph whom I may have admired, or danced with forty years ago, too often crosses me, arrayed in wrinkles and fat, and tells me (in a cracked voice,) how fond I was once of her singing. Only the other day I met in the streets here, a little shrivelled old man without teeth, and a bronzed face, who crawled up to me with as much pleasure as he could infuse into his sunken eye, and said he believed we had been young men together. I begged to be excused, and declared I did not know him ; but the fellow, because he was worth two or three plums, would not be put off, and forced himself upon my recollection, to my own great dismay. Others, again, whom I should be content still to know, take it into their heads not to know *me* ; and the intimacies of joyous youth, and golden expectation, are frozen to ice and forgetfulness, when perhaps their continuance would most warm one."

"This is but a sad account," said the Dean, "and I trust greatly overcharged ; for we know you to be still popular ; only, as is to be expected, you have exchanged the popularity of a youth, for that of an old man."

"Pardon me," said Sadburn, "my popularity, if ever I had it, has fled with my youth. This I could forgive ; for popularity implies not esteem, and is as little to be depended upon as the evanescence of

the rainbow. But of all the caprices of life, those which I most deplore, and can least account for, are not merely the changes, but the causeless dropping, of friendships once dear to the heart. This I have found too often even in youth, how much more in useless old age ! Yet this is between persons not separated by distance, or change of station, or fortune—(for I speak not of upstarts, or the known case of old friends with new faces) ; but where, the outward circumstances remaining the same, the whole inward feeling is thoroughly extinguished. Kindness, alacrity, perpetual and mutual pleasure at one another's houses, are changed, we know not why, for formal bows of recognition ; and all this with no consciousness of having deserved it, but proceeding merely from the vile effects of a vile worldly life. Give me leave to say these are real miseries, which, if you, Dean, have escaped, you are one of the happy. Pray heaven you remain so !”

The Dean, somewhat moved, ventured to doubt the reality of the fact ; attributing much of it to fancy, that often so sported with our feelings ; but Sadburn shook his head.

“ No, Dean !” said he ; “ were I a minister out of place, or a man once rich but out at elbows ; were I no longer able to keep a cook, or had a wife forced to give up her Opera box ; these changes might be expected of course. But to meet

with a vapid and cold stare, instead of a glad welcome, or find a door closed which once flew open at your approach, and all without a reason, comprehensible or incomprehensible; this is a wonder as well as a misfortune, which, with all your philosophy, you can as little unravel as console. You do not, therefore, do well to counsel me to return to a world which has done with me. It is not philosophy, but necessity, that shuts me up.

“ You mentioned balls. I do not go to them because, unlike my friend here, the young people with their lighter toes, and the ravishing music to which I once listened, fill me with envy instead of delight. I have left off hunting, because I saw it had left off me. As for the club, those are gone who once thought me an oracle; and as we all like to be oracles, I say to myself I have done with politics.”

“ Be it so,” said the Dean, “ but a gazette in the closet might still have attractions.”

“ To see who is dead, who married,” returned Sadburn: “ yes; but what man of feeling, or any one really alive to anything but the grossest self-interest, or most unprincipled ambition, can now run that once generous and animated race? Those who find their account in hypocritical professions, and revolt not at being covered with filth and Billingsgate to obtain their ends, may, for me, court and enjoy the applause of the kennel. I

never could admire a popular minister, who to popularity sacrificed his country, any more than a popular preacher who, for applause, prostituted his pulpit. At present I like these mob-courtiers less than ever; they force me to exclaim with Cicero, ‘*Populares isti jam etiam modestos homines subilare docuerunt.*’”

This sentiment met with the approbation of the whole party, and Sadburn went on:—

“Hence, even all-exciting politics have lost their exciting power, and I have little left (*horresco referens!*) but the ironical counsel of the Apostle, ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’”

“I never thought,” said the Dean, “that St. Paul could be pressed into the service of such an argument:—but I have heard that the devil can cite Holy Writ.”

“Allowing your joke,” replied Sadburn, “I think I have accounted for the quiet platitude that has succeeded, in my old age, to the pleasures of youth; which to think of would far from gratify me.”

“Yet many of the pleasures of sense, besides the table,” said Lovegrove, “are vivid to the last. Music, for example, to which Beauvoir has done such justice.”

“Music,” replied Sadburn, with a sigh, “that

reminds me of many a loved person that I have lost. No! my harps are all unstrung, and lie in broken fragments around me. There is nothing, in fact, to break in upon my position, that memory is a sad thing."

"Are we to say, then," asked Lovegrove, "that you care not for the world?"

"Not exactly," he answered, "for I am not one of those who abuse the world because they are about to quit it. I would no more do so than abuse *you*, after all the good things you have given us, because we must soon leave you."

"This is but cold philosophy, after all," said the Dean, "and I would rather call another cause."

Here we looked at the Physician, who was mentioned as a part of our company when we sat down, and who had, as yet, scarcely opened his lips.

"Come," said Lovegrove, as chairman, "there is no one who has such opportunities for observing human nature, as an observing physician. We count upon your enlightening us, from the knowledge you must have acquired of all the passions."

"I grieve to think how you will be disappointed," replied the Physician, whose name was Beveridge, "even though our profession deserved the character you give it. I would rather you applied to a lawyer, if you had one here."

We all protested against this, if only from the insulated lives of lawyers, which rendered them all pedants.

“There are exceptions,” said the Dean; “but, for my part, as soon as a lawyer comes into company, I think myself in the witness-box.

“Where, however, they themselves say,” observed Dr. Beveridge, “more knowledge of the world is to be obtained than in any other given space, though of a thousand times its dimensions.”

“Possibly of the roguish part of it,” said the Dean; “but the touchstone of a sick chamber, and more especially of a death-bed, is more effectual, I should think, in unveiling the heart than a cross-examination.”

“We are more confided in, perhaps,” answered Beveridge, “because less feared. We are required to be softer, and appeals are made to our pity; we see, therefore, more of the little weaknesses and coqueties of our nature, (especially among the ladies,) than the terrific lawyer, who rushes forward, sword in hand, either for attack or defence.”

“It is hence we expect so much from you,” said Lovegrove; “so, according to the instructions of the committee, I beg to ask you, what passion you have found to be the most influential in producing happiness in us poor human creatures?”

Dr. Beveridge paused. "You should have given me notice," said he. "My philosophy is like some people's wit ; it requires preparation. I make all my *impromptus à loisir*. I must rub up my memory, perhaps even my ethics, for the mere list of the passions ; so many implements of action are these last, and so ductile the matter they work upon."

"What would you begin with?" asked the Dean.

The Doctor paused again, but seeing the portrait of a female author over the chimney, presently said, "VANITY."

"I had expected Ambition," observed the Dean.

"And I, Love or Hope," said I.

"And I, Pride !" cried Sadburn.

"What think you of Avarice?" asked Beauvoir.

"Or Religious Fanaticism, or the Pleasure of Revenge?" demanded Lovegrove.

"Is there no one who will advocate the love of Reform?" said the Dean.

"All these," observed Beveridge, "are resolvable into my sweeping class of Vanity ; which, whether in the extent, the duration, or the power of its necromantic empire, I should say was the dominating passion of the world. She is a royal queen ; and the rest, sturdy, violent, or dangerous as they may be, are only her subjects. Nor are the other half

so amiable, or so productive of happiness ;—which, I take it, is our real question. Ambition too often

‘ O’erleaps itself, and falls o’ the other side ;’

and besides, has no resting-place, if it does not. Its pleasures are rather excitement than happiness ; and like the excitement of brandy, it cannot be resisted, but exhausts. Besides, for the most part, it possesses only man, not woman-kind,—whose ambition, if they have it, is in fact vanity, after all.”

“ But love and hope ?” said I.

“ If any could dispute it with the sovereign I have selected,” replied he, “ it would be they. But they have woes and disappointments, sometimes even to madness. The wounds of vanity are, comparatively, mere scratches ; or if wounds, they are like the wounds of Achilles’ spear, healed by itself. Take authors for example. A man’s play is damned. He consoles himself, by swearing the audience was packed : he will ‘ shame the rogues, and print it.’ Depend upon it, a damned author not an unhappy being ; while, if he succeed, who so happy ? There the poet of vanity was right in his apostrophe—

“ ‘ Almighty Vanity ! to thee we owe
Our zest of pleasure, and our balm of woe*.’ ”

* Young’s Love of Fame.

“ You say nothing of the superior force of pride,” said Sadburn.

“ It is great, indeed, while it lasts,” returned the observer of men ; “ but not only its power can scarcely be said to be superior in degree to that of vanity, but its disappointments are gangrenes ; and the number of their votaries is not to be compared. The force of vanity, you know, made Empedocles throw himself into a volcano. Vanity makes patriots, orators, poets, and misanthropes, and even soldiers and sailors : it influences or alters the constitutions of states. On the other hand, it makes more fools than all the votaries of all the passions put together. For even contempt and ridicule are hugged to the heart as sweet, in preference to want of notice altogether. Hence I have known an instance of an author, angry at not being reviewed, sending a very ill-natured critique of his own work to a magazine, which was immediately published, to his very great delight :—

“ ‘ Thus every soul finds reason to be proud,
Though hiss’d and hooted by the pointing crowd*.’ ”

“ It reminds me,” said Beauvoir, “ of an English bourgeois gentilhomme, who boasted that George II. had spoken to him, and when asked what he said, it was found to be—‘ You rascal, what are you doing in my garden ? ’ ”

* Young’s Love of Fame.

“ I begin to be a disciple of your creed,” said the Dean. “ We will not inquire into the moral justice of the phenomenon ; but it is certain I have observed that, though vain people may not be what wise people would admit to be happy, they are seldom the contrary.”

“ They have a delightful elasticity about them,” returned Beveridge, “ which soon restores them to plumpness and rotundity, whatever indentations they may have suffered from disappointments, little or great. Their dominions, too, are more widely extended than any other. Look at all the professions.”

“ Physic among them !” cried the Dean.

“ O ! by all means,” answered Beveridge : “ Who so happy, for instance, as the youthful Esculapius, when, for the first time, he steps into his chariot ! what sound was ever so grateful as the rolling of its wheels ? Should he throw off in the City, and get transplanted to the West end, the advance in happiness is immense ; but get him to Windsor, and his fool’s paradise is consummate.”

“ You are at least honest,” said the Dean ; “ but can so grave a profession admit of such feelings ?”

“ Nothing more common,” replied the Doctor. “ There is my friend ——, an excellent phy-

sician, a scholar, a philosopher, and a learned lecturer. He first practised in the City; then got to Bedford-square; is now very West indeed, and attends Dukes. No youthful lover smiled upon by his mistress; no youthful senator successful in his maiden speech; no gentleman cadet, when he first carried colours, was ever more pleased with this progress than my learned friend. The deserved respect which the whole college sincerely show him, is not half so delightful!"

"I suppose he cuts his old friends of the City," said the Dean.

"Not quite," returned Beveridge; "but he sometimes has been known to say, 'After I have looked in upon the Minister, and inquired after Lady Elizabeth, I am under the necessity of attending an *opulent tradesman*.' Never was a happier being!"

We were all amused with this picture, and gave the Doctor credit for his candour, as it was of his own profession, though the Dean said it was a little roguish, and looked like treason.

"I think you speak so much *con amore*," continued the Dean, "that your own vanity must be excited in describing that of others: certainly conversational vanity is not the weakest."

"Far from it," replied the Doctor, "and I

scarcely know any species of it that confers greater happiness. It also excites industry and learning to a very great degree."

"Learning!" cried we all.

"Yes! for many people who can, and do read, would never have done so, but for the hope of shining after dinner."

"We have all, then, I perceive," said the Dean, good-humouredly, "studied a great deal this morning; for we have, at least, been very agreeable; and if it is owing to this delightful passion, you ought to write as well as talk her praises, as Erasmus did those of Folly. Did you, however, ever know Vanity do any good to others, in consequence of possessing it?"

"Ask the whole world for your answer," said Beveridge. "Look at all the ball and dinner-giving nobility, gentry, and clergy; ask the open-house-keeping country 'Squire; ask the modern Macænases, and almost all patrons of all departments. To how many thousands of dependent agents are not its advantages communicated! Look at the thousands spent perhaps in one night, all to be repaid by perhaps one little newspaper paragraph the next morning. Can the gratification of any passion say so much? For my part, I shall always bless it, for it first got me into business."

“This must be curious,” said we all; “pray tell us how.”

“It was merely thus,” replied Beveridge: “you all know Lady A., of the very first fashion and influence, whose least countenance, or word of praise, is almost a certain fortune to its happy object. Luckily for me, she was, and is, an authoress; and luckily, too, for my good faith, did *once* write a very tolerable book. Well, my stars seated me one day next to her at a dinner in a very great house. How I came there I can hardly tell, still less how I came to be so seated. As she was highly *blue*, and of the very best *monde*, I was frightened out of my wits, but was saved by two little critical circumstances. Her Ladyship, provided she was allowed to talk, did not greatly insist upon being talked to; and I, on my part, had very great talents for listening, which I had acquired at three or four Continental Courts, whence I had just returned. This made Lady A. think it worth her while to throw away a few minutes upon me; and afterwards I became so agreeable——”

Here we began to laugh, but he proceeded—

“I see your inference from this, and that you think me as vain as anything I have described. But I am innocent; for all I meant was, that I became so agreeable *by listening*, (for, luckily, not one word could I get in,) that the Lady gave me

still more of her attention. In particular, she was anxious to know whether the rage for English works continued abroad, and whether a treatise she had herself brought out, upon matter and spirit, had begun to be read in Germany. Luckily for me, I had only to tell the truth, that it had been well translated, had had many readers, and I had heard it commended by a Professor of the University of Bonn. No more passed, but this was decisive; and I afterwards found that Lady A. had everywhere pronounced me a gentleman of the very first understanding she had ever met with. Not only this, but Lord A., a great valetudinarian, who left the medical as well as every other department to her Ladyship's management, sent for me soon after; many brother invalids of quality did the same; and from that time I may date an advance into something like regular business. Have I not, then, reason for my homage to Vanity?"

We all agreed that this was beyond contradiction, and hoped as he had now got among the ladies, he would not dismiss the subject with a mere Blue, whose foibles might be that of a gentleman.

"We wish to see more of the dear creatures," said Lovegrove, "in their night-caps and dishabilles; which your physicians have the advantage

of us in doing. Pray instruct us a little in female, as you have in male vanities."

"The subject would be inexhaustible," replied Beveridge.

"So much the better for us," observed the Dean ; for—

' Whether the charmer sinner it or saint it,
If folly grow romantic, you must paint it.'

"All we wish to know is whether this happy passion, as you depict it, can shed its influence even over a sick room."

"I have seen such a thing," said Beveridge, "and never knew whether to approve or deplore it most. In a moral point of view, and as a physician to the soul, like you, Dean, I should know what to do ; as a curator of the body, I am afraid I was not sorry to have vanity for my ally ; it has saved me many a stimulating draught."

"And pray may we ask under what favour could that appear ?" said the Dean.

"Ask younger physicians than myself," answered the Doctor, "and particularly the unmarried ones. I certainly do remember having, when thirty years younger, felt the pulse and looked at the cheek of ladies, much more set off with becoming ribands and laces in their caps, their shawls more gracefully put on, and their eyes, perhaps, less heavy, than at present. I pretend

not to divine the reason ; but if a church prevent not a flirtation, I see not the reason why a sick room should ; that is to say, when the physician is young, and the lady not very ill. If death, indeed, impend, and the doctor be old, or married, the case is somewhat altered. If not, the sick room of a lady may have as many barometers as a drawing-room. I remember, indeed, being once the confidant of a brother physician, who had conceived great hopes, from his patient, a widow, having added muslin borders to her sheets during his visits. But they were all petrified on her taking them off again, and never having renewed them. Could I but see those flounces again," said he, " I might yet be happy !"

Imagine our laughter at this sally of the Doctor. He wound up with saying that, where the cases had not been very lingering or exhausting, he had seen the love of pleasure and the love of sway prevail with females, at least to within a very few hours of death itself ; and he concluded by asserting that those lines of Pope on Narcissa were by no means a caricature.

" Odious in woollen, 'twould a saint provoke,
Were the last words that poor Narcissa spoke.
No ! let a charming chintz, and Brussels lace
Wrap my cold limbs, and shade my lifeless face.
One would not sure look frightful when one's dead—
And Betty, give this cheek a little red."

With this sally the Doctor concluded his pane-

gyric on vanity, which ever since I have ranked among my sources of happiness.

The party having now almost all delivered their opinions, Lovegrove turned to Sir Felix Buoyant, who, it will be recollected, had arrived at Bath only that morning, with letters of introduction to him ; and whom he asked, if not disagreeable, to favour them with his sentiments on the subject in discussion.

“ I have listened,” said Sir Felix, “ with as much pleasure as attention, to my enlightened neighbour here, who, as human nature (mind, as well as body), is his professed study, ought to know (and, no doubt, does know, better than any of us,) what are the most important springs of human happiness. His praise of vanity, too, is so forcible, as well as amusing, that it would make a good pendant to the praise of folly by Erasmus. What his own profession, as well as the ladies he has calumniated, will say to him for his calumnies, he must, I suppose, have calculated, when he ventured so far in support of his theory. For my part, I am not so courageous as to run the risk of rousing a nest of hornets ;—which he certainly would, if his opinions were known. I, therefore, in very kindness to him, propose that none of us divulge the sentiments he has broached. I allow, however, that vanity is perhaps of all passions the

greatest exciter, and the greatest soother, except possibly one, which seems somehow to have escaped us."

We all, with one voice, asked what this could be.

"What all of us," replied he, "have more or less felt, more or less lived upon, more or less worshipped, pursued, eulogized, or execrated, from our cradles to our graves!"

"He must mean ambition," said the Dean.

"Love," said Beauvoir.

"Avarice," said Lovegrove.

"Glory," said I.

"Despair," said Sadburn.

"Hope," answered Sir Felix; "hope, that mixes itself with all you have named, and would with every other you could name—even revenge and envy. Nor, strong and bright as vanity is, never ending, still beginning; ever varying, ever buoyant; in sickness, or in health; in the cottage, or the palace; in rags, or in velvet; can she in any of these respects boast a greater, certainly not a sweeter power, than hope possesses over the heart of man? It supports him under every, the blackest misfortune; when all is lost he will not believe *himself* lost; it gleams through the bars, and opens the locks of a prison; nor will it abandon him even at the gallows. I remember once a lieutenant of

the navy, who went through all the pains of drowning by falling overboard, and who, being asked what he felt or thought of while sense remained ; ‘ Faith,’ said he, ‘ exactly of what happened—that you would fish me up again before I was quite dead.’ ”

We admired this illustration, and only wished for more. Sir Felix went on :—

“ In what, then, does not this delightful passion influence, soothe, or strengthen our nerves ? It led Columbus round the world, when no one knew the world was round ; it impelled Cortes and Pizarro to undertakings which might have frightened Alexander himself ; and it succeeded in propagating true religion, though opposed by fire and sword. It prompts to deeds of death, to gain renown or fortune, where no chance seems to exist for either. What was the motto of the gallant but rebellious Percy, when he aimed at the dethronement of his ungrateful master ?—‘ *Esperanza*.’ But hope equalizes, not merely the noble, but the beggar, with the king. It brings the soldier to a level with his general, and gives his mistress to a lover’s arms. But why enumerate or attempt to describe beauties or properties which have been already painted in never dying colours, by one whom we may call her own high-priest and poet, and who built her a temple to which we always throng again

and again with the same delight, and always quit with the same regret*.

“In humbler prose, why do we call the days of our youth, *par excellence*, our *beaux jours*, but because they are gilded all over by this delightful passion ; resembling, in this spring of our lives, the sweet spring of the year, or, as it has been exquisitely described—

‘The morn and liquid dew of youth.’

I need not, therefore, ask you to recollect the picture of Hope by another of her poets, bidding ‘lovely scenes at distance hail’—calling upon her to prolong her strain—

‘And where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope, enchanted, smiled and waved her golden hair.’”

We were all pleased at this rhapsody, all but Sadburn, who looked dissent, particularly when the panegyrist of Hope concluded by saying—

“In short, it is the very genius and life-blood of our mortal career ; and as the imagination is as unbounded, as the future is uncertain, it is better and richer than possession itself. For possession satiates ; while hope never tires, but is the spur of the young, and the support of the old.”

“Of the old !” cried Sadburn, with emotion.

* We need not say this high-priest and poet was Campbell.

“What hope can exist for those who are past all hope?”

“The greatest of all I have mentioned yet,” answered Sir Felix; “the hope of another world!”

“Quite right,” observed the Dean, “even in a sensual point of view; for it will give Sadburn the best zest for his turtle and venison, which, he says, is the only pleasure left.”

This hit at Sadburn’s last remaining pleasure, was quite in the Dean’s own way; a hit and a sermon at the same time; and it made all but Sadburn himself laugh. Sir Felix went on—

“I need not tell you of the gamester’s hope, when he risks a fortune upon a card; of the farmer’s, when he ploughs his fields; of the merchant’s, when ‘he sails from far;’ nor even of the robber’s in the forest of Germany, when formerly he lay in wait for hours, and with his ear to the ground, to ascertain the approach of a carriage! Shall I talk to the Doctor here of the hope of a sick-bed,

‘Hope travels through, nor leaves us till we die.’

or to the Dean of that of a death-bed? The last I have glanced at; and I, perhaps, should not be contradicted by many, where I to say that, with a proper subject, it is the brightest of all.”

“Certainly not by me,” observed the Dean; “and

you could not have wound up your catalogue of benefits from Hope better than by this illustration."

"You say nothing of failures," said Sadburn.

"Nor is it necessary I should," replied Sir Felix. "It is not requisite for our dreams of happiness that they should be realized; any more than that the greatest of all pleasures, those of imagination, should be sober certainty. Who, as we have already been told, has not been happier in his dreams, than when awake?"

"Aye! there's the rub," said Sadburn; "and were I disposed, I could give you authority for authority; good prose truth, for your poetical fictions. I think it is Feltham who calls this mistress of yours 'the miserable man's god, but the presumptuous man's devil;' 'the bladder of a boy learning to swim; it keeps him from sinking, but tempts him beyond his depth:' 'she fools us,' says the old moralist, 'with her silken delusions.' 'She is generally a wrong guide, though good company on the way,' says Halifax; 'she brusheth through hedge and ditch, but coming to a great leap, is apt to fall and break your bones.' 'Lastly,' says Bacon, 'she is a good breakfast, but a bad supper.' In my opinion, therefore, she is a confounded jilt."

"Be it so," said Sir Felix, nothing disconcerted; "for did I not tell you imagination was better than

possession itself? And who would refuse the delight of believing while it lasted, from the fear that in the end he might be deceived? What would not you yourself give to be young, happy, and jilted again?"

This occasioned some merriment at Sadburn's expense. The Physician, who had hitherto been silent on this topic, observed :—

"All this is very good, and I should be tempted to give up the superiority of Vanity, could you name anybody in practice who did not, from his disappointments, like our knight here of the woful countenance (though his we know to be imaginary), deny and rebel against your theory : for I own myself, there seems to be much in what Sir Woful has urged against your suppositions, warm and attractive though they be."

"I know not," returned Sir Felix, "that I can supply you with such an example as you may choose to require ; nor do I admit that what you require ought to be a *sine qua non* to your assent to my doctrine,—which is, you will observe, only that Hope, *while it continues*, is as powerful an influence as I have represented her. I have nowhere said (but the contrary), that what she holds out is to be realized. Yet, if it were necessary, I think I know one, who, without succeeding, nay, who failing in many of his expectations, has continued to be happy

through life, because, in whatever situation, Hope never abandoned him."

"A nonsuch, or a fool!" exclaimed Sadburn.

"Neither one nor the other," returned Sir Felix; "but in truth, a plain, though active and confiding, homely gentleman, of some degree in the world. He is always aspiring, always in pursuit, and though disappointed in one thing, never deterred from attempting another. It is astonishing how many roads he has tried, how many relinquished; enjoying them all while new or promising; sunning himself here, shading himself there; now at sea, now on shore; a traveller by land and by water; a soldier, a sailor, a student, a poet, a philosopher; a reviewer, a politician, a farmer, a fox-hunter, a fisherman, a lover, a husband. Some of these he relinquished; some relinquished him. All gave him pleasure while they lasted; none pain when he quitted them. He was often, to be sure, cheated in his hopes; but no matter,—he hoped to do better another time. He was also often cheated in his purse; no matter again,—he would find honester people to live with in future. He lost some friends by death; some by caprice. He regretted the first, but did not pine. He sought not to forget them, by way of relief, but cherished their memory, as his best consolation. For the capricious, he thought caprice deprived

them of their value, and looked upon them as base coin, that would not pass. In whatever he undertook, he *hoped* to succeed. If he failed, and it was his own fault, he could not complain; if another's, it could not have been helped, and he was not to blame."

"This is as pleasing as it is extraordinary," said the Dean; "there must surely have been some secret talisman, some fairy blessing at his birth, which you have not told us of."

"None," replied Sir Felix, "but a good constitution, a contented disposition, health, and quiet nerves. These, certainly, are the gift of Heaven; all the rest depends upon ourselves."

"But who may this extraordinary person have been?" said we all.

"I know not that he was extraordinary," replied the Knight; "but whatever he was, you see him before you. He is your humble servant."

At this he bowed, and Lovegrove starting up, could not help shaking him by the hand, and thanking their mutual friend in London for the accession of pleasure which his letter of introduction had procured him. In this we, one and all, cordially joined. For myself, my regret at so soon quitting this pleasant society, was only increased by the impression made by this new member of it.

On this the party broke up; and the evening

being fine, and the walk pleasant, I was glad to accept of an invitation from the Dean, whom I had begun much to like, to accompany him back to Bath on foot.

We canvassed all that we had seen and heard at Lovegrove's, particularly the Doctor's nursery dissertation, which seemed much to the Dean's taste. The account of himself by Sadburn, did not to me augur much for his happiness, although his culinary pleasures, which he did not disguise, either in theory or practice, might give him on the whole, a sort of contented existence:—for the sleekness of his skin and the ruddiness of his cheek made up in some measure for his bent brow and melancholy air. He was, however, anything but like Yawn; for, having had no disappointments, he had no spleen. But it was evident that regrets for past pleasures, both sensual and mental, predominated; and gave a tinge to his character, which was at least not exhilarating. His hopelessness of everything was what most struck me, and this I could not help remarking to my companion as we walked home.

“Poor man!” said the Dean, “this is indeed a defect that enfeebles his powers of enjoyment, which might otherwise be considerable, notwithstanding his age. For you see he is well-informed, intelligent, and has by no means thrown away his

opportunities. Moreover he is worthy and good-natured, and upon occasions like that we have just witnessed, capable of being good company. He burthens no one with his supposed miseries, which, in fact, are much exaggerated, and therefore the more easily kept to himself; while on the other hand, the pleasures of sense, to which (having, as he holds, been deprived of all others,) he says he has a right, are by no means neglected. In one very important point, I have endeavoured, I may say professionally. to reclaim him. I mean his hopelessness. This, so far from following because he is old, ought, with minds properly imbued with religion, to depress him less and less, the nearer he approaches the greatest of all hope, that of future happiness."

"To tell you the truth," said I, "I rather wondered you did not bring this forward in the late discussion."

"The place did not suit," answered the Dean; "we had met for mirth and merriment, and when I am a gentleman at large, to be thought a meddling parson, is the last thing I would wish. In private, however (for I really value the man,) I assure you even my zealous labours are not wanting."

"And I trust they are successful," said I.

"I grieve to say," replied the Dean, "not yet. The world, the loss of which he so much laments,

has still too great hold of him. However, in that respect, having no very atrocious misdeeds to reproach himself with, and being in truth an honest man as the world goes, he is absolutely blessed, in comparison with another moral patient of mine (for so I call them,) whose mental sufferings it was torture to behold, and which were only relieved by death."

"You greatly excite my curiosity," said I, "and if not impertinent, I cannot help thinking that the reason you gave for being excused from taxing your remembrance of former impressions, arose from some feeling of this kind."

"You have guessed right," replied the Dean; "and the case I allude to, would, I assure you, be not unimportant for a philosopher of human nature, much more a Divine, to investigate. But the story,—if a confession of a thousand wretched faults, and a fear of dying, mixed with a professed disbelief of a future state, which was shocking,—can be called a story, would have implicated this poor sufferer, whom I will call Miserandus, too much for me either to hint at his name, or dwell upon his case. Yet, as the human character seems to be your study, and this sample of it has often baffled me, if you will call upon me before you leave Bath, we will talk farther upon it. Perhaps your stores may enlighten mine."

“ I will willingly attend you,” I replied, “ though without any such hope.”

We then fell upon other matters during the remainder of our walk, by a pleasant twilight, which lasted till we saw the white buildings of the city, towering in grandeur above us, and lit by a glorious moon, which now arose in cloudless majesty,

“ And o’er the deep her silver mantle threw. ”

SECTION XXIX.

REMORSE.

“ If thou be’st Death, I’ll give thee England’s treasure,
 Enough to purchase such another island,
 So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain.”

“ Lord Cardinal, if thou think’st on Heaven’s bliss,
 Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope !
 He dies, and makes no sign. Oh ! God forgive him.”

2nd Part of HENRY VI.

I GAVE above a week longer to the cultivation of the sensible and benevolent Divine, whose character and conversation had so much attracted me ; and who seemed so much at peace both with himself and the world (the follies of which last he both bore with and laughed at,) that I could not help giving him a niche among the happy. Indeed, I gave the place itself credit for a great deal of interest, and therefore of happiness, as a region where a man who wished to unite the quiet of independence with social pleasure, might do well to pitch his tent. I therefore entered into what Lovegrove told me had been his motive when he

resolved to quit public life, for settling here, instead of at a very pretty paternal residence which he possessed in Cumberland. It is true the latter was among the lakes, and the lakes were paradise ; but only, as he said, to occasional visitors, or to men devoted to solitude from being estranged from the world. It is true too, there were poets who, amid these recesses, had delighted the age, and who enjoyed them as solitudes.

“But as I was neither such a poet as those, nor sought solitude from any other cause,” said Lovegrove ; “and as I certainly had not quarrelled with mankind, I willingly renounced a scene and manner of life bordering upon dullness, for one which allowed me to cultivate the agreeable of my species, without subjecting me to the leaven of common-place.”

The dinner and conversation I had recently enjoyed at Lovegrove’s, made me readily understand these motives.

It may be supposed that I did not neglect the Dean’s promise, of informing me further concerning Miserandus ; though I left it to himself to choose the time for performing it. He had a long room or gallery, quite at the top of his house, lined on both sides with books, which we often visited. One morning, after we had taken three or four turns in it, he stopped and observed, “This retired place,

where I only see the world in the various lore which surrounds us, always reminds me of the poor man I lately mentioned to you."

" Miserandus !"

" The same. It was here that he unburthened himself of much of the load that pressed upon him. But I fear the unburthening of it did not ' cleanse the foul bosom ;' nor could any topic I might use pluck the ' rooted sorrow ' from his memory."

" He had then, I suppose, great crimes to repent of."

" Great crimes certainly ; but he was perhaps even still more remarkable for a perpetual, unremitting continuance in a career of disgusting petty vices, which, while they preyed upon his conscience, and hurt his pride to think of, plunged him into a system of unceasing hypocrisy, in order to disguise them both from himself and his fellow-men. For, strange to say, he was a sort of Balaam, that worshipped the idol Reputation ; and really like Balaam, he wished to ' die the death of the righteous,' although in his secret mind he was every day and every hour doing that which, if known, would have forfeited all claim to it."

" A most extraordinary character," I observed, " and such as I yet have never met with, though I have seen hypocrites enough."

" The most marvellous part of it," continued the

Dean, " was, that though he was perfectly aware of the number of wrongs, and even meannesses, he was in the habit of committing;—such as secret breaches of faith ; falsehoods and flatteries without number ; corruptions, violations of decency of all kinds, and positive injuries to the happiness of many ;—yet he was so little alive to the reproaches of his own heart, that he laboured to stifle them by the most disgusting sophistry."

" And did he succeed ?"

" Often so far as to preserve a tolerable opinion of himself. Nay, such was his devotion to the character and name of ' gentleman,' that to have been proved unworthy of it, or at least that it should have been discovered, would have driven him mad."

" You astonish me," said I, " more and more."

" I am astonished at it myself," said the Dean, " though I have often had it before me. Yet such is the inconsistency of self-love, and such the power of bad habits, that to be a contradiction seems only a part of our nature. Here, however, the contrast between what he thought, and what he did, was so glaring, that it surpasses imagination to think how he could consume so many years, as life flitted from him, before the consciousness of guilt broke over him like thunder. He owned to me that his whole life had been a deceit ; and yet he pro-

fessed (and believed too) that he abhorred disguise. His countenance was open, and so he thought his heart; yet every minute of the day he had some motive to conceal. He was constant and adroit in flattery, yet hated a flatterer worse than a thief. He violated all rights of confidence, and was faithless to trust; yet never having been detected, assured his own soul that good faith and honour were the noblest attributes of man. He had also many larger vices, not so easy to conceal, which corroded him therefore the more; since, though he was content to be criminal, he could not bear to be suspected. Hence, to those who were cognizant, and those who suspected, he became the absolute and most miserable slave. This he confessed was the severest punishment his proud spirit could undergo; and he owned to me in a tone of rage, as well as remorse, that the misery of being in other people's power was equal to any hell that could be inflicted upon him."

"Poor wretch!" I exclaimed; "but surely there must have been vices in his life far greater than those you have described, amounting, I should think, even to the grossest sins."

"You shall hear," proceeded the Dean. "A long and wasting illness, and the sentence of his physicians, having convinced him that his life was shortened, he came here to die: and as he had

always kept so fair with the world, it gave him much of its sympathy. This pleased, but it also distressed him; and for the first time he turned his eyes inward upon himself, without the sophistry which had hitherto prevented his seeing, what he justly called, his deformity. He had been often made anxious, fearful, and mortified, by what menaced him from without; but he was now miserable from the goadings within. In short, at the age of fifty, he for the first time discovered that there was such a thing as conscience; and he was haunted by spectres he had never seen before. Under this pressure, being his old acquaintance, he sent for *me*. I suspected the nature, but did not understand the facts, of his case. I saw there was a load upon his mind. His destiny was not so immediate, but that he might have indulged in society; which he was always fond of, and for which he was formed; for he had ability and address, and was much liked by the world. But he now shunned company, was much by himself, and was sometimes seen in lone places, striking his forehead, and casting his eyes to heaven, as if in distress. I once found him in this situation; and asking him kindly after the cause, and whether I could be of any service to him; he wrung my hand, and said, with a deep sigh, he believed I could. When I professed my readiness, and asked how, he answered, ‘this is not

the place, and I have much to think of. Come to my lodgings to-morrow.'

"I will," said I, "and trust I shall find you resigned to the will, and trusting to the mercy of Heaven."

" 'Oh, God! that it were so!' he exclaimed, in agitation;—and waving me away, I thought it best for the moment to leave him. The next day he seemed more composed, but it was the composure of despair."

" 'I have begged you to come to me,' he said, 'because I do not think you a bigot, and you can talk rationally even about religion. But it is not of religion I wish chiefly to speak. If there be another world, to *that* I may address myself by and by. At present it is what has past in *this* world that employs my thoughts and fills me with horror. I am dying, and feel that I could leave some reputation behind me; but I am bound to confess, and I *will* confess, that I do not deserve it.'

"I was struck; but thinking that by confession he wished to obtain the consolation of religion, I told him to hope the best from mercy promised to repentance."

" 'No!' said he, impatiently, and rather loftily, 'it is not that; but having all my life long lived upon deceit, I am so much shocked at having stooped to it, that I have resolved to punish myself

by stripping off the mask, and revealing my infamous heart in all its depravity.'

"Good God!" I exclaimed, greatly shocked. "May I not hope this is exaggerated by a remorse which often attends, on these occasions, minds that have been naturally good?"

" 'Would to Heaven,' exclaimed he, 'that your supposition could be founded, and that my mind ever could have been good! And yet,' said he, with still more misery in his voice and manner, 'I was always, from a boy, alive to a tale of honour, or a trait of virtue. How is it, then; tell me, I conjure you, you who by profession, education, and, I believe, disposition, are a casuist,—tell me how it is, that with this temper and taste; with a mind open as day to all great and generous impressions; an admirer, in theory, of everything pure, disinterested, and independent;—I have been in practice all that is base, selfish, and corrupt—in a word, a consummate and most rascally hypocrite?"

"Here he covered his face with his hands, as if afraid to meet my eye."

" 'And yet why,' continued he, recovering, 'why should I shun this scrutiny—I who have courted it as a retribution (a severe one) for all the imposition I have practised on mankind? I consider myself on my death-bed; but, unlike a death-bed

confession, this does not proceed from fear. There can be no fear, merely because I am turned to clay, and no more—— that——’

“ I was sadly shocked, and was going to reply, when he stopped me.”

“ ‘ No ! my dear Dean,’ he continued, ‘ not now. I know what you would tell me, of an hereafter, and of peace with Heaven. But this is not what influences me ; it is my horror at my own base concealment of my real character, and my perpetual affectation of virtues and sentiments I never practised, but the reverse of practised, that prompts these feelings. Shrink not from me when I tell you, that the man of supposed integrity, honesty, and honour ; the pure and delicate lover ; the kind husband and friend ; the humble and believing religionist ; the independent patriot ; in his childhood was a picker and stealer, and, as he grew up, an evil speaker, liar, and slanderer ; in youth, a false pretender to everything he admired ; in manhood, a fawning sycophant, an ungrateful friend ; a seducer and an adulterer, though linked to a radiant angel. Lastly, a wretched Tartuffe ; a cold and deceiving infidel.’

“ My God !” I exclaimed, “ what horrors are these ! but may I not still hope they are the exaggerations of despair ?”

“ ‘ Alas ! No ! At five years old, like Rousseau, I accused a servant wrongfully, and saw him punished without compunction. He haunts my dreams even now. At school I sneaked to the master, as I afterwards in politics sneaked to the Minister ; as a young man, I made friends by fine professions, and having used them, left them. If I was charitable, it was from ostentation. With refinement and constancy on my tongue, and admiration in my eyes which I did not feel in my heart, I courted and ruined young women, whom I afterwards tossed from me. My wife, the meekest of beings, I absolutely murdered by unkindness ; I broke her heart, though she never whispered it ; and no murder was ever more provable, though never known. Yet all this while I carried myself fair with the world, and was reckoned a man of good theories and principles :— which was true, whatever the practice. As a proof of it, behold me now, a hardened wretch certainly, contaminated and corrupted to the core, yet too proud to let the world, when I leave it, suppose that I was the good man I pretended.’ ”

“ Here he paused, and with unaffected sorrow I beheld this extraordinary and appalling wreck ; for he absolutely writhed with mental anguish. Thinking to lead him to some better motive, I told him there was a still higher object than pride to prompt these confessions, and that piety——”

“ ‘ Hush ! hush ! ’ said he ; ‘ I have told you that this is useless. I begged you to come to me, not as a clergyman, but a friend, who knows the world ; spare, therefore, my feelings and your own labour. You would harrow my mind with the vengeance of an offended God. I tell you at once, that in that God I do not believe.’

“ Seeing me shudder still more at this, he went on—”

“ ‘ Let me, however, explain. I am not such a fool as to think that we made ourselves, or that we were made by chance. But that we are to live again, be rewarded or punished, or that we do anything more than fill up, like other brutes, the place designed for us in the creation, whatever the end of that design, has long by me been decided in the negative. The piety and atonement, therefore, which you were going to set before me, as a motive to my confession, has no share in it ; it is sheer disdain of the hypocrisy I have practised, which has made me thus immolate myself. I have worshipped an idol, for which I sacrificed all self-esteem, all quiet of heart, all real interest ; and, I may say, all health. This burning cheek ; this hectic that consumes me ; my withered brow, my faltering tongue, my whirling brain, prove it too fatally. Can I do otherwise than dash this idol to pieces, as I now do, by these disclosures ? No !

No ! If false pride led me perpetually wrong, true pride shall, for once, put me in the right. The only amends a hypocrite can make for having affronted the world by living in deceit, is to confess his hypocrisy, and submit to his shame. Yes ! It is but right that everybody should know I am a rascal.'

“ Here he absolutely trembled with the distress of the conflict ; and his agony was so great, that I feared immediate exhaustion. Indeed, he could not go on ; and after having just kept his shattered frame from sinking, he said he would retire till better able to resume the conference. I left him with feelings which you may easily imagine. The interview gave me food for thought, and will for the rest of my life.”

SECTION XXX.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

“ Oh ! thou eternal mover of the heavens,
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch !
Oh ! beat away the busy meddling fiend,
That lays strong seige unto this wretch’s soul,
And from his bosom purge the black despair.”

HENRY VI., Part 2.

“ THE next morning, Miserandus forestalled our meeting by coming to me, and in this very room resumed the terrible interest of our preceding conversation. When I asked him how he found himself, he answered—better, though one day nearer his inevitable end ; ‘ but better,’ said he, ‘ because I think I have done right in confiding what I have to you ; but as to comfort—it is as far off as ever, nor have I any prospect but to despair and die.’

“ Do not say so,” I answered ; “ if you will only divest yourself of the prejudices which seem

to have clouded your reason as well as your hope, and which, I fain would believe, are the chief causes of your despair—you—”

“ ‘ You would still talk to me of a hereafter, and of a future judgment,’ said he. ‘ Oh, God ! what is that but to confirm despair, and make annihilation bliss !’

“ Not so,” said I ; “ if you would only look at the consolations of religion, as well as the fears which it undoubtedly inspires. We are mercifully (oh ! how mercifully !) promised everything upon true repentance ; and that you are in the right road to it, I cannot help hoping. Your present agony, frightful as it is to yourself and to me, demonstrates it. I implore you, therefore, for your soul’s peace, in this its last struggle, to embrace the offers of a pardoning, though offended Maker, and to profit by the light which, spite of your asserted disbelief, seems breaking in upon you.”

“ ‘ I have no light !’ replied he, moodily, yet with a deep sigh, and clasping his hands together, as if they were bound by fetters.

“ Say not so again,” I replied ; “ this very dejection, this remorse, this voluntary though late retribution by a confession,—the last thing to be expected from a hardened man ;—all this shows a

mind on which good seed has been sown, and which yet may come to fruit."

" ' 'Tis too late,' said he, in a tone of agony, yet mixed with fierceness; ' but were it not, you are wrong in thinking my confession arises from remorse, still more from fear. I have no fear, and certainly no hope. These both belong to the living, not to the dead.'

" This is dreadful," said I.

" ' Far from it,' he replied; ' it is even comfortable to those who have passed a life of wrong doing, such as mine. But comfort does not, I own, stand for argument: my opinions are deeper founded. Why, I would ask, are we to live again, any more than the brutes we affect to despise; ourselves, in many things, the greater brutes? Reason gives no clue to this: reason, that convinces, in one way or other, in all other things!'

" I agree to that," said I; " but you forget the light of the Gospel, the best gift of all, and given expressly *because* Reason, as you say, suffices not for conviction."

" He seemed touched, and striking his forehead, exclaimed, ' Ha! if this were so!' then striding up and down the gallery, he gave way to an agitation which I watched, hoping it might lead to better

conclusions. But all was disappointment. In a few moments his despair, and wish for belief in his horrid creed, returned, seemingly with redoubled force.

“ ‘ No!’ said he; ‘ flattering as this might be to another, it can have no flattery for me :—its proof would be perdition. But no fear of it. Whatever crafty priests or hot-brained zealots may say, the Gospel must have been the creation of folly and superstition, nursed into life by enthusiasm, and preserved and extended by self-interest. But grant it true: how desperate, how agonizing the belief for me, and all like me! Oh! my good friend, the task you have undertaken is beyond you! I even wish not to be convinced; for with him who despaired as well as I, I say to myself—

“ ‘ Farewell hope, and, with hope, farewell fear;
Farewell remorse: all good to me is lost.’ ”

Here the Dean stopped, overpowered by his recollections; and though so entire a stranger to Miserandus, and almost to the Dean himself, I was also much affected at this description of a mental wretchedness, the existence of which the butterfly-life I had led had not taught me to contemplate. I ventured, however, to express a hope, though without much expectation, that renewed

efforts on the part of this excellent divine had wrought some change in his patient before he died.

“ I am sorry to say not,” replied he ; “ the gangrene of his mind had spread too far. In fact, the fear which he professed *not* to feel, was the real cause of his infidelity. He wished for annihilation, because he was afraid of immortality ; nor was there time, before his death, by converting him to a better creed, to prevent his despair from taking deeper root. Like the slave of laudanum, who rejects his physician, and is left to himself, his only relief was to increase the dose till it killed. And yet, notwithstanding his ostensible obstinacy with me, he must have had many struggles, and sad forebodings with himself ; as some of his papers, which were delivered to me by his desire, witnessed. Among them was a collection of the heads of arguments for a state of future retribution, and which concluded with passages from Shakspeare, and one from the Psalms.

“ ‘ Tremble, thou guilty wretch,
That hast within thee crimes unwhipp’d of justice.’

“ ‘ The weariest and most loathed worldly life
That age, acts, penury or imprisonment
Can lay on nature, is a paradise
To what we fear in death.’

“ Then came the Psalmist :—‘ Innumerable trou-

bles are come about me ; my sins have taken such hold of me, that I am not able to look up, and my heart hath failed me.'

" Poor, poor man ! had he been spared, these compunctious visitings of the closet might have turned to good.—But God knows best !"

" My dear Dean," said I, pressing his hand, " your story is most melancholy, but most impressive, and must do good to all who are in danger of becoming, like Miserandus, wilful infidels. I trust there are not many such."

" More, perhaps," said he, " than you are aware of. Yet whatever the disbelief professed by thousands, too gay, too indifferent, too occupied, or too wicked to give their minds to this greatest of all subjects, depend upon it, of all the sources of happiness or unhappiness in this struggling world, there are none so deep, or so critically important, as the proper settlement of our religious faith."

This solemn conclusion of a narrative pregnant with interest of the highest kind, wound up the subject in a manner to leave nothing wanting. It was a lesson which I have treasured ever since, and which, I am sure, will never be forgotten.

SECTION XXXI.

FIELDING'S SEARCH AFTER WILLOUGHBY.

“ For now I stand as one upon a rock,
Surrounded by a wilderness of sea.”

AFTER taking an affectionate and respectful leave of the excellent Dean, who was in himself a happy proof of the happiness which his profession can cast upon a sincere good man, I, at length, quitted Bath. I had not forgotten my promise to Willoughby, to join him in Dorsetshire; and on leaving, therefore, this once gay resort of pleasure, and still full of hope to many an invalid, I took the road across Wiltshire to Weymouth.

Few people, who have not seen it, can imagine the rugged, unsheltered savageness, by sea and land, which belongs to the Isle of Portland. The craggy shores of the north may exceed in terror this oft named but little known Isle. But for desolateness of look, and seeming seclusion from

the vigilance or protection of man, nothing can exceed the rocky boundary that skirts it, and extends to the west as far as Lyme. The inhabitants are what might be expected,—rude and rough. Smugglers, to a man, if not something worse. The rocks afford shelter for beings who, almost as rough as themselves, can find comfort wherever they find protection ; and they find both in the caves with which this weather-beaten coast abounds.

I turned my steps to this island, expecting, from its proximity to Weymouth, that if forced to wait for Willoughby there, I might pass my time not unpleasantly till he joined me. Meantime, I made excursions along the shore of the main land, and found spots not so bleak and unsheltered as at a distance they appeared. A pleasant firm sand to ride or walk on, with a mound of gravel on the land side, ornamented with green furze, formed a picturesque contrast to the foam of the sea. Here I sometimes sat me down, with no seat but the rock, and no *animated* companions, at least, but the straggling shell-fish. What I chiefly loved was to watch the waves, ever varying, never resting, now advancing, now retiring ; threatening and rough, or calm and smooth. Loud and tumultuous, they sometimes thundered ; or, hushed to a

whisper, they seemed to lull the mind to rest. This is no trivial pleasure to a thoughtful man. My superiors enjoyed it before me; for Cicero counted the waves; and the spot I have described reminded me of Felpham, the honoured retreat of Cyril Jackson.

I had been near a week in the neighbourhood, and had one day straggled to a distance of several miles from the brown old castle,—indulging the contemplative disposition which had been growing more and more upon me, ever since I had left the paphian regions of London. It was one of those calms I have mentioned, and the stillness was only interrupted by small pieces of rock, which now and then, loosening from the parent mass, rolled down the declivities into the sea. I had watched these falls for some time, thinking of little or nothing—in fact, in a sort of contented reverie—when on a sudden I heard a gun fire in the offing, which in an instant broke the whole enchantment.

Two vessels appeared, one pursuing the other; and, as I presently observed, a boat, full manned, put off from one of them, and pulled with the utmost vigour towards the shore. It effected its purpose within a stone's-throw of the place where I

was sitting, while my groom led my horse along the strand. And now, about a dozen rough-looking men landed, leaving their boat adrift. They ran up a hollow way between the rocks, imperceptible before from the masses of sea-weed, mingled with furze, which hung over the cleft. The men ran faster when they saw me ; but suddenly one of them, who did not at all seem to be of kin to the rest, stopped, then turned, and ran back from his fellows as eagerly as they were pursuing the upward path. He ran towards me, and judge my astonishment when I found it was Willoughby. He was, as may be supposed, in some little agitation, and seeing my surprise, said, " This must appear strange, but I have not time to explain. My confounded garb may get me into worse difficulties than I have escaped from. I see your horses. Perhaps you will let me mount one of them, and when I think myself safe, you shall know every thing."

It may be supposed that I assented, and making my groom dismount, Willoughby, to my great amusement as well as wonder, took his place on the saddle. My new livery was, to be sure, an odd one ; a check-shirt, no coat, canvas trowsers, very much tarred, and a cat-skin cap. But I

could get nothing from him, from his eager watch of another boatful of men, that seemed to have pursued the first to the shore. A low promontory then screening it from view, he became calmer, and before we got to the small inn opposite Portland Castle, was able to give me a little insight into this mystery. As soon as he was there, however, he sent off immediately to Weymouth to get an equipment of clothes, but which he was forced to order from a slop-shop; his own being, he said, he knew not where.

From my knowledge of Willoughby's wandering and eccentric taste, I perhaps should not have been surprised at all this; but his eagerness to escape from the spot where I met him, and the joy he expressed at finding himself in security, made my curiosity on tiptoe. If the reader's is so too, it shall be gratified in the next section.

SECTION XXXII.

WILLOUGHBY'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF.

“ Of being taken by the insolent foe,
And sold to slav'ry ; of my redemption thence.”

OTHELLO.

It may be recollected, that my wandering friend left me at Marlborough, meaning to cross the Wiltshire Downs into Dorsetshire, the coast of which he had never seen. This scheme he pursued with his usual activity ; not, however, with his usual good fortune.

Having reached Dorchester without much to notice, he conceived the design of making a sort of steeple-chace diagonally to Lyme, and so return by the coast to Weymouth. This, he was told, would introduce him to a wild and picturesque country, rather savage and uncultivated in appearance, and full of heath-tracks, not easy to unravel with certainty, or leading to any abode but

that of shepherds. It was just the sort of expedition he wanted.

He had got safely and agreeably to Lyme, where, he said, he revelled in red mullet ; and one of his horses falling lame, he would have been content to revel some time longer, but for his promise to me. So, leaving his man to watch his lame steed, and when he could travel to follow him slowly to Weymouth, he set off by himself coast-wise, to keep his appointment. He was pleased with his road, which lay chiefly by the shore, through fishing villages, and almost always in sight of the sea, but sometimes winding inland, through very rough glens, or over steep and shaggy cliffs. His taste for deviation where anything was to be seen, induced him often to quit the beaten road ; and at the end of the first day, he was so lost, that having in vain sought direction, he was absolutely benighted, without knowing where he was, and only guessing by its roar, that the hill he was mounting was not far from the sea. The moon, however, shone bright, showing every turn of the road as it wound up the steep. Not a breath of air, or the quiver of a leaf, interrupted the stillness ; and a little past midnight he felt relieved by the sight of three or four cottage-thatches, which rose one

above another as he ascended. All, however, was buried in sleep. His fellow-men had, for some time, seemed to have retired from the world ; for not a creature had he seen for the last seven miles. Even the cattle, in two or three upland meadows, were recumbent in silence, save where, now and then, the sound of chewing the cud was to be heard.

He felt unusually alone, and there is always something solemn in being alone at night, amounting almost to awe. He debated whether to rouse some of the inhabitants of the cottages he saw, either to procure a lodging, or directions for the road ; but the absolute misery of the hovels forbade the first ; and, as the path he had pursued had now brought him to what appeared a high road, he resolved to continue his route. His horse was now at the steepest part of the hill ; so steep that he climbed with difficulty ; and though we will not say the traveller was alarmed, he was a little struck, as the wind began to whisper on his gaining the summit, to hear something creaking, as if upon hinges. A screech-owl, too, which had for some time been circling round him, now took its flight to an object which he could not well make out, but which appearing to his hopes a direction-post on the bordering heath, he put for-

ward his horse to examine it. As he approached, he was surprised by the animal making a full stop. He even shivered in the saddle, laid back his ears, reared and snorted; showing every mark of unaccountable terror. Willoughby, though an excellent horseman, was fain to dismount, in order to calm the creature's perturbation, and, indeed, to discover, if he could, its cause. But what was his astonishment, and, he fairly owned, his emotion, when he found that what he had thought a direction-post was, in fact, the gibbet of a murderer. The face, skull, and bones were quite visible; and the clanking of the chains in the breeze had occasioned the creaking he had heard.

The moon was still bright, but every now and then overshadowed by passing clouds; and the alternate vanishing and return of this unpleasant object, made it still more disagreeable. However, having in some measure quieted his horse, he prepared to remount when he was astounded by the most hideous laugh in the air that he had ever heard. It was, a minute after, repeated in another place, and again at intervals, when it assumed the tone of a deep howl. He owned his firm nerves began to lose much of their firmness at this; nor was his alarm lessened when a voice, loud and

hoarse as a speaking-trumpet, bellowed out, " Hold off, hold off."

A noise among the bushes that surrounded the gibbet added still more to his terror—for terror it was ; and though little superstitious, he knew not what to make of so strange an occurrence at such a place and time. From this he was presently relieved, but by a terror full as great, though of another sort ; for, on endeavouring to mount his horse, while one foot was in the stirrup, and he was throwing his other leg over the saddle, he felt it forcibly seized by a rough hand, and his bridle by another, and beheld four men in shaggy coats, who, with loud and horrible imprecations, asked—what the hell he did there, and why he did not leave in peace a better man than himself?

I own, at this part of the story, I began to feel almost as shaken as Willoughby says he was himself ; and nothing but seeing him safe and sound, cured me of a very strange sort of trepidation for his sake. However, he went on with his narration, and a fearful one it was. The men offered no violence to his person, except detaining him prisoner, and ordering him to follow them ; threatening, if he made the least noise or resistance, with instant death, though they might all swing for it,

as they said, like the gentleman he had come to visit. As they all had hangers, and pistols in their belts, this appeared so very easy an affair, that Willoughby had no inclination to be unnecessarily scrupulous, but promised peremptory obedience. His wonder, as well as terror, chiefly was to know into whose and what hands he had fallen; and he could not help asking what was to be his fate.

“That you will know fast enough,” said the gruff voice, “as soon as our Captain comes; meantime shut your eyes and hold your tongue, or it will be worse for them both.”

The plot now thickened. A long sort of caravan, drawn by two horses, and attended by two men in dark frocks, approached the gibbet, under which it stopped, and one of the men said it was late, for the moon would soon be down, and there would not be time to load. “But who have you here?” continued he, seeing Willoughby.

“That he knows best,” replied the same voice that had before spoken. “We found him here under poor Tom—for what purpose we shall find, provided Captain ——, when he comes, does not ——”

“Hold!” replied the man of the dark frock; “remember, there is to be no more blood; but you will hold him fast, I trow.”

“Trust us for that,” returned the other; “but what to do with him I don’t know: but here comes Captain.”

Seven or eight horses, all loaded, some with bales, some with kegs, now came up the hill, on the other side of the gibbet, conducted by as many men, all armed; and one, who seemed the leader, was immediately accosted, and taken to a distance by the first man, while the rest were instantly at work to unload the horses, and stow the packages in the caravan.

Willoughby now found he was prisoner to a desperate gang of smugglers. He was not at all comforted by the reflection, and still less relieved by the thought of the gibbet, and the few words that had passed between the two ruffians at the foot of it. Neither was he consoled by having only the day before heard at the inn in Lyme, the full and true account of the murder of Mr. Chaytor and another Custom-house officer, by being whipped to death by the smugglers who had broken open the Custom-house at Poole, the very county he was in. I am no Custom-house officer, thought he, God help me! But the conference between the Captain and his mate being ended, they advanced and examined him, in a sulky, savage tone, as to his business in

such a place, at such a time of night.—“ I suppose,” said the Captain, “ you are one of the damned sharks of Lyme ; him perhaps who hanged the poor fellow there.”

Willoughby told the truth, as he thought it best to do, and owned he came from Lyme, but was no shark, and only a traveller.

“ What, at this time of night, and in such a place ! No ! my boy, we are not such culleys as that. I suppose you know,” added the Captain, “ that your life is in our power, and that we would no more mind taking it, than *he* did, for all his chains,” (pointing to the man on the gibbet.) “ If you deceive us in a single article, you are a gone man ; so if you are an officer or a spy, you had better say so at once, and we shall know what to do.”

Willoughby protested his innocence, and in regard to his being in that suspicious place, in vain laid the blame on a wandering disposition, and having lost his way : “ but, in truth,” said he, “ I found myself under a very different judge from dear honest Heartfree, and almost gave myself up for lost.” All this while the loading was going on, and the Captain rather anxiously walked up and down under the gibbet, often regarding what was swinging above,—with what feelings or impulses,

said Willoughby, I know not. The extraordinary thing to me was, that the gang should have selected such a spot for their operations. At first I thought it bravado ; but I afterwards was told it was for security ; for that no person, either at Lyme or in the neighbourhood, dared in the day time, much less by night, trust himself so near the grim smuggler who there hung.

But the business of loading being now finished, and the band preparing to retreat, the Captain's decision was at length promulgated ; and fearful enough it was for Willoughby ; for as he had had an opportunity of witnessing the transaction, and becoming acquainted with the actors, it was determined that, spy or not spy, he should be detained prisoner, unless he chose to join fates with them by embarking in their dangerous trade. As to this last he could give no answer, they resolved upon the first ; and accordingly, mounting him upon one of the pack-horses, all of which were also now rode by the gang, and threatening to pistol him if he offered to escape, they began in single file to descend the hill, down a dark and tangled path which led to a large sort of yard or wharf, full of coals and timbers, at the head of a creek. There a long-boat lay moored, and the horses

being haltered in the yard, Willoughby's among them, under the care of part of the gang, the rest leaped into the boat with their prisoner in custody, whom, after rowing about a mile, they deposited with themselves on board a stout well-built cutter, canvas all loose, and anchor a-peak, and in a few hours were mid channel, between the coasts of Dorsetshire and Britanny.

During the night the men caroused, and offered Willoughby some brandy and herrings, which he declined, but lay down on a bulk head, just over the cabin ladder,—the only bed, they said, he could have. It may be supposed he did not sleep, and his comfortable feelings may be guessed, when he heard the following conversation between the captain, whose name was Bowser, and his mate.

“ I'll be d—d,” said the captain, “ if I half like that scarecrow post for a landing-place, and I think we had better cut down poor Tom, next night we go. He seems to grin at us every time we come. Nay, I once thought I saw him move, as if he would have come down,”

“ You are a hell of a coward, Bowser,” said the mate. “ You a captain ! What ! I warrant I cotched you blubbering, when Tom were condemned. Yet he went out of the world like a man—and here

you have now put us in the power of this hen-hearted feller—who I frightened out of his wits only with a laugh. Besides—you know nothing of true gumption. If you cut down Tom, what's to prevent any other ninny from Lyme coming to watch us as he did? I say he is a clear shark, and if you had taken advice—”

“ Hold, hold, you dog,” said Bowser, “when you have got your Nantes on board, you are fit for nothing but Davy's locker. You know I am no coward, and as for the man, he may be innocent, though he came from Lyme. If, indeed, he was a proved shark, I should have no objection—”

“ To stick him, I suppose, as Tom did t'other. D—n me if I believe you. But what shall we do with him now we've got him?”

“ Land him in France,” said Bowser.

“ To get safely over the water again, to peach us all! Why he knows our werry wessel. Why should'nt he even now fall overboard by accident? Eh!”

“ You're but a bloody rascal, Tomlins,” said Bowser, “and I tell you I'll have no roughing, unless he can be proved a scout.”

“ I suppose, however,” replied Jack, gruffer than ever, “you have no objection to my changing

clothes with him : since we hoisted the glim, I observed his coat and boots, and I think they'd just do."

" If you choose to be such a blackguard, Jack," replied Bowser.

This closed the conversation, for both captain and mate began to snore over their brandy ; but the consequence was, that at daylight, the mate calling Willoughby into the cabin, told him that, for a blast of a spy like him, he might think himself well off with no other punishment than surrendering up all his clothes—which was no robbery neither, as he, the mate, meant to bestow his own upon him in return.

To this, Willoughby, dreading the hands into which he had fallen, prudently consented ; which accounted for the strange metamorphose under which I saw him.

Thus equipped, for the time he remained in durance, he was treated like one of the crew, only with rather less respect ; and though he offered a large ransom if they would set him on shore in France, it was refused. At the same time, what was remarkable, no attempt was made to rob him of his purse ; which being in his pocket when the mate made the forcible exchange of clothes with him, was, with everything else, faithfully brought

back to him by the Captain ; though accompanied by not a few growls on the part of Tomlins. In this situation they held off and on at the mouth of the Loire, receiving, from time to time, whole boat-loads of moonshine, as they called it, from Nantes, in the stowing of which they forced Willoughby to work as hard as themselves. This, however, he said, perhaps did him good ; for his thoughts were none of the pleasantest. The Captain was the only one not uncivil to him ; and this forbearance was jealously watched by Tomlins, who seemed to bear him no good will, though he obeyed him. The manners, language, looks, and conduct of the whole crew were shockingly disgusting ; and sometimes dreadful. A perpetual suspicion, horrible and impious curses, showed a dissoluteness of behaviour, in the most absolute sense of the word ; for they seemed loosed from every tie of decency, either in language or sentiment. The insecurity in which, being all of them outlaws, they passed their lives, made them familiar with danger, without being free from the dread of it. Hence the night was always their time of action, and the day brought them no comfort. It was common with them to say, “ We know we are born to be hanged ; it is, therefore, of little

consequence what we do." That was their *morale*. Their happiness was brandy and tobacco, which put an end to thought. They had not even the merriment of carelessness which belongs to other sailors ; for when not drinking, smoking, or quarrelling, they were melancholy and evidently unhappy. Tomlins, from the dreadful abandonment of his mind, was, sad to say, the least sad among them. All had committed crime ; some of deeper die than others, but all of a low nature ; so that there was nothing redeeming among them.

With these worthy companions Willoughby passed ten days, and to the Captain alone, who lent him a razor and a check shirt, he owed that he did not die of disgust and filth.

His case had now become most melancholy ; for he had no hope of escaping. The lading of the cutter being completed, they stood back again for the English coast ; their object being Portland. Off this, when almost in sight, their fortune threw them in the way of a Revenue cutter, of at least twice their force. To maintain a running fight was all they had for it, and, as their enemy gained upon them, to run ashore, and escape, if possible, among the beds of rock and furze, by paths well known to them, was now the summit of their

hopes. Accordingly, having run into the shallowest water they could, their only resource was the boat, which they had but just time to man; and this accounts for the precipitation of their flight when they landed.

Willoughby was glad to accompany them on shore, as he feared infinitely more to remain and be taken by the captors, who would have been (particularly in his disguise) as hard of belief as to his story, as the smugglers themselves. However, like father Æneas, being now out of danger, and having recounted the history of his voyages—

“ *Conticuit tandem, factoque fine ; quierit :*”

in plain English, having told his tale, he stripped off his dirty clothes, and till those he had ordered should arrive, went to bed.

Here I left him, to order some more generous refreshments than the coarse salt fish and beef which had been all the fare allotted him by the smugglers for the last ten days. To this, when he waked (for he had fallen into a sound sleep), he did ample justice : and seeing him well recovered in strength and spirits, I could not help rallying him, by asking what effect this adventure had had upon his wandering tastes, and whether it would make any alteration in his plan of life.

“ It will make me, in future,” said he, “ avoid gibbets, and night marches on the sea-coast, particularly that of Dorsetshire. As for any thing else, ‘ hæc et olim meminisse juvabit.’ And after all, I was not in so much danger as when before the Revolutionary Tribunal.”

“ You may thank your Captain for that,” I observed.

“ By the way, there is something about that man that interests me. He certainly was less of a brute than his fellows :—which is all I can say for him,” returned Willoughby. “ But had I been a Custom-house officer, or really a spy, he told me he would have had no more bowels than Tomlins himself ; and this he seemed to justify as lawful.”

“ I should be glad to know how,” said I.

“ Why, it was his *destiny*, he said, to be what he was ; and destiny must be answerable for all that he did in pursuing it ; that he did not like blood, but would rather shed it than be himself hanged. In fact, he supposed he had often shed it in contests with the King’s cutters, when under the necessity of fighting ; which necessity, he always added, was of their own causing. You may suppose I had nothing to reply to such a casuist ; nevertheless, I could sometimes see a doubt, not over

pleasant in his own mind, as to the soundness of this reasoning ; and he would almost hesitate, till a glass of brandy, the Devil's ally, reinforced the argument. If I had any hope that he was not so wicked as the rest, it was from his perpetual disgust at Tomlins, whom he evidently hated."

" Poor devil," said I ; " suppose we mount our horses to-morrow, and explore the passage by which they escaped. I dare say we might make interesting discoveries."

" I thank you," returned he, " but I have no stomach to be pressed again on board a private, still less to fight for him against my lawful sovereign."

" Why, the Custom-house would thank us," I replied.

" I am obliged to you," returned he, " but the very thought of a Custom-house gives me, and will for some, something very like an ague."

We had scarcely ended this conversation when, much to our concern, as well as surprise, a report was brought that the Revenue cutter which the smugglers had engaged, though only in a running fight, had put into Portland Road with her prize, but with the loss of a man killed. This had created quite a sensation ; a search was ordered by the

Coast-guard, and a proclamation for a great reward on the arrest of any part of the crew that had escaped on shore. This did not add to Willoughby's quiet, or diminish his joy at having, as he said, so providentially escaped from the gang whose fortunes he must have shared.

I proposed that he should give information of what he knew to the Mayor of Weymouth, and point out the path the rogues had taken when they abandoned their boat. But I could not prevail. Not, he said, that they did not deserve it; but they, and the Captain in particular, had spared his life, when it was proposed to take it, to which, indeed, some were shrewdly inclined. The mode proposed by Tomlins to prevent his *peaching*, was still in his ears; and he thought it would be hard to make any one repent that he had opposed such a step. To these reasons I could not but defer.

Several days passed afterwards without any discovery of the smugglers; and Willoughby, having been joined by his servant, was seeking another horse to replace that he had lost, when he was astonished with the following letter, which his groom told him had been put into his hands by a sailor from the Isle of Portland.

“ SIR,

“ Though smugglers are called by many, and thought by some, to be dishonest persons, merely because they sell their goods cheaper than the lawful rogues, they are not, on that account, robbers, and still less horse-stealers. Your conduct in not joining the hue and cry raised by our oppressors against us, for defending our own, which you might have done with some effect, merits our thanks. When we mastered your person, for very good reason why, it was not our intention to steal your horse, which from necessity was left on shore, and which would have been restored to you, had not the tyranny of the Government given us too much trouble about ourselves, to be nice about others. If you will apply any time in the next two days at the Royal George, in the Isle of Portland, and inquire for Robin Benbow the ostler, and come alone, and ask no questions, he will deliver your horse to you, saddle and bridle and all; and having once, without you knowing it, saved your life, and now restoring your property, which was never intended to be stolen, I trust you will think that a smuggler, though ill treated by the world, may yet be an honest man.”

This epistle, fairly written, correctly spelt, and containing a defence, however sophistical, of his honest calling, Willoughby said could be written by nobody but his friend Captain Bowser. "But how the devil he could have found me out," added he, "puzzles me. It makes one curious, however, to see him again, though I believe, if I did, I should feel like Gil Blas, when he met Captain Rolando in the street, after escaping from the subterranean cave. Still I would give something to know more of him, and, if possible, withdraw him from this horrid life."

"You will never succeed," said I. "You see he is a theorist, and reasons upon his way of life, till he denies it to be wicked; and like many other theorists, no doubt he thinks all law and government mere invasions of man's liberty. I dare say he has read of the Pirate who told Alexander that he was but a robber like himself, (in which he was not far wrong,) and no doubt takes him for his hero. No, no! depend upon it he has settled the matter with his conscience, and were you to make the attempt, with all your fine reasoning, you would find yourself no match for brandy and bad habits."

"The dog, however, moves my curiosity," said

Willoughby, as he prepared to cross over to the Island, to seek his horse at the Royal George. When he arrived, he easily found the ostler to whom he had been directed, and with him a gruff sailor-looking man, muffled in what is called a flushing coat, or more vulgarly and properly, a wrap-rascal,—whom he recollected having seen three or four days before, watching him, as he thought, in the streets. The man's features he had not caught, but he recognized the dress, if only from its resemblance to that of several of the smugglers with whom he had lately associated. This man, after whispering something to the ostler, immediately withdrew.

“Are you Robin Benbow?” asked Willoughby, addressing the ostler.

“I suppose I be,” returned he.

“Then you, perhaps, know what I came here for.”

“I suppose I do,” continued he; “you be come for a horse, if you be Master Willoughby, or whatever your name is. There's the nag in t'other stall.”

“And who may that man be you were just now talking with?”

“ Don’t know—never saw him before.”

“ Won’t you tell if I give you a pot of ale?”

“ Should like the ale—but don’t know the man.”

“ Perhaps you won’t know?—But what if I gave you this crown piece?”

“ Should like the crown piece—but don’t know the man. Besides, I was told neither to ask nor to answer no questions; so if you want your beast, take him; his hay and corn is paid for, and if you will give me the pot you talked of for saddling and bridling him, you may; if not, the sooner you leaves here the better.”

Willoughby, upon this, finding he could get nothing out of old Benbow, deposited with him a shilling, and, glad to greet his lost steed once more, left the Royal George, which his reception plainly indicated was a sort of smuggler’s-hall, and returned to Weymouth.

The impression made upon Willoughby by his recent adventure was deeper than I could have imagined. I had thought him one of the carelessly happy; eager in quest of novel interests and scenes, but soon forgetting them for others. In truth, his good feeling was here concerned, so as to absorb him in an unusual manner.

“ But for this Bowser,” said he, “ I should long ere this have been food for sharks, if there are any on the coast of France. I am quite certain that this man, outlaw and villain as he is, must have originally been made for better things. He is now at hide and seek for his life, for he is proclaimed by name. I would give not a little to save him, if I could, or, at any rate, to get at something of his history.”

This feeling was so far from losing ground with Willoughby, that it grew stronger and stronger, and at last took such hold of him, that he proposed to me to accompany him on a voyage of discovery along the westward coast. “ If I can at all find a clue for meeting Bowser,” said he, “ I’ll lay my life good will come of it; if not, at all events, we shall see two very interesting counties, in Devonshire and Cornwall.”

As adventure was my object, to this I made no objection. We mounted, and soon got to Lyme. Here our first inquiry was about the affair of the smugglers, which we found was kept the more alive by the recent caption of Tomlins, who everybody said would swing for it, and who, in fact, was afterwards hanged upon the very gibbet where his friend, poor Tom, had made his exit.

The good nature and love of justice of Willoughby here underwent a severe contest. Duty impelled him to offer his evidence, which would have been decisive against this miscreant. Charity made him question himself as to motives, and fearing they might savour of revenge, he resolved to remain quiet.

The question was to trace Bowser, upon which every one was busy. Some said he was still in a cave on the coast: others, that he had been seen in a coach to London; a third party, that he had escaped to France. This last opinion weighed most with Willoughby, the rather because the *Fair Trader*, which was the name of the lugger, was known to be of Nantes, where Bowser was domiciled. It was at least likely that he should go there if he could. This opinion gained ground from a report that Bowser had been actually seen in the boat of a French vessel a little way from shore, three days after the capture.

Come what come might, it made Willoughby so restless that he could no longer forbear; and to indulge him I promised to make a tour in Devonshire by myself, while he should Quixote it, as he said, to Nantes; promising to let me know the

result at Exeter, where I agreed to establish my head-quarters. The passing to the coast of Brittany was the least difficult part of Willoughby's undertaking, and in about a week I received the letter, which will form the next section of these memoirs.

SECTION XXXIII.

THE SMUGGLER'S STORY.

1st Outlaw.

“ Know then that some of us are gentlemen,
Such as the fury of ungovern'd youth
Thrust from the company of lawful men :
Myself was from Verona banished,
For practising to steal away a lady.”

2nd Outlaw.

“ And I from Mantua, for a gentleman,
Whom in my mood I stabb'd unto the heart !”

3rd Outlaw.

“ And I for such like *petty* crimes as these.”

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

“ WILLOUGHBY TO FIELDING.

“ Nantes, June 20, 18—.

“ You laughed at my eagerness, and, I believe, doubted my success; but, as far as finding the man I sought, you must laugh no longer. As many, particularly at the hotel I chose, were talking of the capture of the ‘ Fair Trader,’ it was easy to find out to whom she belonged, Messrs.

——, on whom I waited, fairly telling them my object. They were civil enough, allowed they knew where Bowser was, but naturally wished to consult him before they promised an interview. The next day, however, brought me his consent, and I found myself alone with him in an apartment at their house. He showed some emotion at the sight of me ; but it went off.

“ ‘ I have consented,’ said he, ‘ to trust myself with you ; first, because, here at least, you can do me no harm ; next because, though you may owe me a grudge for making and keeping you a prisoner, I believe you saw it was through necessity, and not my will ; lastly, because you owe me far more thanks than resentment, for nothing less than having saved your life. Add, that your keeping aloof from giving information against us, shows you one above a nasty revenge, and, in short, that you are a gentleman.’

“ I replied to this pithy exordium, by telling him, I knew I owed my life to his protection from Tomlins, who, however, was about to expiate his cruelty, for I had left him in prison for trial.

“ He turned as pale as he could on this intelligence, and shrugging his shoulders, said, ‘ If that is so, he must swing for it ; there is more against

him than would hang half a dozen of us: but I always told him it would be so. He is a butcher and a blackguard, and deserves his fate; the worst part of mine has been to have had him for an associate. But now, Sir, as to your object in searching me out?"

"I told him fairly my motive, which was to do him good, if I could, in return for the good he had done to me. This rather affected him, and with some eagerness he asked, if I thought I could obtain him protection if he came to England.

"I said, that was at best uncertain, and at best could only be purchased by the discoveries he might make as to the unlawful trade he carried on; especially as a man had been killed, which would be held to be murder. At this he flew into a sort of rage, and stamped,—

"‘Murder!’ exclaimed he; ‘Unlawful trade! Discoveries! Never, Sir; never shall it be said—and yet,’ he added, more calmly, and as if recollecting himself, ‘it is a wretched trading, and could I quit it; could my life be passed over again!’—Here he paused, but afterwards burst out with—‘But, no! They never will grant a pardon; I must continue an outlaw; and as to murder or

unlawful trade, I deny it, and the crimes be on those that call them so. I am oppressed, deprived of my rights, and ruined, and yet called a criminal. I would quit my misery, if I could, yet am punished if I continue it. Hard !, hard ! d——d hard !’ Here he walked about in agitation, and beat his breast more than once. ‘ Would to God,’ at last he said, ‘ I had been the meanest labourer in Devonshire, rather than what I am ;—but it is false to say I am a criminal.’

“ I let this burst subside a little, and then observed, I was sorry to think that he did not see his situation in the proper light, and only wondered that a man who seemed to have so many good points, should so disguise the truth from himself, as to the bad ones. I added, that my wish was to reclaim him, if possible ;—which if seriously done, efforts, at least, should not be wanting to restore him to society.

“ On this he fixed his eyes upon me with much scrutiny.

“ ‘ I believe,’ said he, ‘ you may be sincere in what you say. I on my part ought to be equally so ; and if I am, I am bound to own that I fear you will not succeed. No ! I am too confirmed in

wickedness, *if it is wickedness* ; and though I may be sold to the devil, and know it, I cannot break the contract if I would.'

" ' This is shocking,' said I.

" ' It is so, but it is true. My habits are too strong for me.'

" ' I trust not,' said I, as mildly as I could ; ' your terrible occupation has, no doubt, hardened your feelings, but something tells me this could not always have been so. You are evidently an educated man, and must have been born'——

" ' Do not go farther,' he interrupted, ' it will be worse both for you and for me. I have been too long an outcast, to make recollection other than misery : and, after all, I only fulfil my destiny.'

" ' You glanced at this,' said I, ' some time ago, and as I really wish to be useful to you if I can, I would ask for as much information, as it may not be disagreeable to you to give.'

" He paced the room two or three times in silence, or muttering to himself ; when, after a pause, he said, ' Stranger as you are, you could not have taken all this trouble for a person to whom you are indifferent ; and it will, perhaps, only relieve the

loaded mind of a man whose vices have ruined him, if I fairly confess my history to you.’

“ I bowed assent, and he went on.

“ ‘ Whatever I may think of destiny and its irresistible decrees, I certainly should not have imagined from my education, or the situation of my family, that I could ever have been intended for this wretched life. I believe I was born a gentleman, if the son of a Methodist minister (of good private substance, however,) can pretend to that title. My father, as I said, was a Methodist, but of what exact sect, I never could well make out, if he could himself. All I could discern was, that he was a most determined and implicit believer in and preacher of predestination. He talked much of a great divine, John Calvin; though what John Calvin taught I never knew, except, as I collected when a boy, from my father’s discourses, that it signified little what we were inclined to, as every thing was determined for us. I own this laid early hold not only of my imagination, but of such reasoning powers as I had, which were very little; and I betook myself, therefore, to anything that struck my fancy, without examining consequences as to myself or others. I

was full fourteen years old, before my father, who was a severe man, had done flogging me for this, and it was in vain I pleaded, according to his own doctrine, that what I had done was not my choice, but ordained for me. His reply always was, "True, and it was also ordained that I should flog you for it." This went on till I began almost to hate my father; which I also believed I was predestinated to do. Notwithstanding this severity, there were other tenets, of a political nature, which my father held, and which made a still deeper impression upon me. It was upon the unlawfulness of law, as emanating, not from the ordinance of Heaven, or even the intentions of nature, but the mere caprice of man. Hence he held that it was a mere question of prudence, whether any person should obey or disobey the laws, if he thought them tyrannical.

" ' Upon my word,' said I, ' your reverend father would have made an admirable Reformer. It is a pity he had not lived in these enlightened times.'

" ' Be that as it may,' continued Bowser, ' I greedily swallowed all (and it was not a little) that my father said of the usurpation and oppression of Government, and the shameful and sanguinary

laws that were made, as it was said, for the protection of property. You may guess what an effect all this had upon a boy of fourteen, of strong appetites, overbearing in his temper, and thinking constraint of any kind the worst of evils, without a single principle on the other side, to control him.'

" ' You have said enough,' I observed, ' to account for any ruin you may have to announce, and I only wonder to see you here in safety, after such a life as you must have led.'

" ' You may perhaps wonder more,' said he, ' as I proceed. The free and early indulgence of my passions, which were precocious enough of themselves, laid the foundation of my ruin ; for they were wholly without restraint from all I was taught to believe, and still, I fear, believe, as to the inutility of combating one's destiny, and the injustice of law. Hence I ran headlong into the grossest, and, for my age, the most terrible excesses. At fifteen, women got hold of me, and as we lived at Plymouth, their description was of the lowest order. The consequences you may guess. From the same locality, and association with sea-boys of my own age, drunkenness,—and afterwards gaming. This last was near plunging me deeper than, I am glad to say, it did ; for I listened (I did no more) to

a plan laid by some of my companions to rob my father's house ; which I was to abet by letting them in at night.'

" At this point of his miserable narration I really shrank and shuddered. He perceived it, and went on.

" ' I am not surprised at the effect this has upon you. It has often had the same upon myself, notwithstanding my life : but I have told you I escaped that perpetration.'

" I eagerly asked ' How ?'

" ' I can scarcely tell you,' said he ; ' for my religious tenets, (if such they can be called,) if they did not encourage, certainly did not repress me : and if this act was ordained to be, how was I to blame ? If I was saved, therefore, from this crime, it was only because of a feeling of abhorrence for it, strong, but for which I could not account ; and as I have had this feeling on other occasions, though not springing from reason, I suppose it is a sort of instinct in my nature.'

" ' You are, at least, lucky in this,' said I.

" ' I wish I had been equally so in other things, he replied ; ' but here destiny was again at work. At seventeen I was destined to be the ruin of a young woman of good parents ; for which I was

justly turned out of what I had left of respectable society; not more for the fact itself, than the consequences of it:—for I was too young, and too entirely without means, to make reparation,—which I was really disposed to do. The poor creature's having lost all protection from her family, who behaved cruelly in her misery, she died of a broken heart.'

“ I again shuddered ; but seeing he was really himself affected by his recollections, and that a tear actually rolled down a cheek as rugged as iron, I did not interrupt him by making any remark*.

“ ‘ This,’ said he, when he proceeded, ‘ was the worst, or, at least, the action I most regret in my life ; far worse than what, I suppose, you and law-

* The reader may be struck here with a manifest resemblance between the character and conduct of the smuggler Bowser, and of the smuggler Nanty Ewart, in *Redgauntlet*. I am struck with it myself, and still more so, that I never met with the latter till some time after the former had been prepared for the press. This is the more strange, because, I perfectly well remember *Redgauntlet* when it first came out ; though how I came not to finish it, or not to read it many times over, as I have done *almost* all Sir Walter's works, at this distance, I cannot tell ; but most certain it is that when I described Bowser, I had not the most distant notion that Nanty Ewart existed, and I therefore let the sketch go forward, or rather do not recall it, with all its inferiorities.

yers are pleased to call murder, because a man happened to be killed in a fair fight by our lugger, in which, exclusive of my not having myself directed the gun, there could be no more harm than in fighting our lawful enemies.'

" ' You make no difference, then,' said I, ' between a nation we are lawfully at war with, and your own countrymen?'

" ' None in the world,' returned he; ' for are we not as lawfully at war with the Custom-house as the French? And if mischief happens, let the Government, who impose the taxes, answer for it.'

" ' Whatever I *might* have replied to this reasoning, I let the Captain proceed.

" ' However,' said he, ' I suppose we shall not agree upon this point; but I shall say, again and again, to the end of the chapter, that poor Bessy's death, which I never meant, caused me more unhappiness than would the lives of twenty men on board a man-of-war that came to rob me of my rights, though I laid myself every gun that killed them.'

" ' This mixture of softness and remorse, with hardened insensibility to flagrant crime, as well as the glaring sophistry with which he defended it, filled me with wonder. But though shocked, I was curious to hear more: and I could not help asking,

whether his father all this while had done nothing to reclaim him.'

" ' O! yes,' he said, ' remonstrances, threats, and sermons were not wanting; but somehow or other the poor gentleman had entangled himself in such a labyrinth of difficulties as to destiny and election, that he could not clear them up to his own satisfaction, still less to mine.

" ' In the end, continuing the course I have mentioned, my father, who never liked me, turned me out of doors, and I entered immediately on board a man-of-war. This was certainly not a school for reformation, though there were many sober, and even religious, characters among us. By these last, who knew my bad name, I was avoided and despised. Had it been otherwise, perhaps I might have been recovered; but I was left to the dregs of the crew, and all my bad habits were more than confirmed. I was more and more drunken, profane, and, at last, mutinous. For this I was, over and over again, flogged; which only made me more moody and rebellious; and, at last, stung with indignation as well as driven to despair, in company with one or two others of the same kidney, we contrived, while in Portland Roads, to escape in the jolly-boat, on board a smuggling lugger which we knew, and where we

were joyfully received. To avoid the guilt, or rather the penalties, of felony, however, we set the boat adrift, to be carried ashore by the tide, and were soon in safety in France.

“ ‘ Hence began a new career. I was soon a smuggler of sufficient accomplishments to be looked up to. As a man-of-war’s-man, I was valued as a seaman; and my education having been far above that of all my fellows, I became of great consequence, not only to the Captain, but the owners of the vessel, who called themselves English merchants, established at Nantes. They were delighted, too, to find in me so able and earnest a defender of the lawfulness of our calling,—which was only made unlawful, I held, by a set of usurpers of man’s rights. In short, my usefulness and superiority to the rest of the crew not only made me a favourite, but a confidential agent; and my behaviour in one or two actions, both on board and on shore, finished my reputation; and, upon the illness of the Captain, who was worn out, I was, without hesitation, appointed his successor. The sea thus became my element, and as I plunged willingly into its hardships, so I adopted all its supposed enjoyments,—brandy when on board, women when on shore—pelf always.

“ ‘ I got so rich as to become part owner, and though outlawed over and over again, the tightness of my lugger, (which I named the Fair Trader,) and the bold daring of my men, made me set all custom-house force at defiance, whether by sea or land.

“ ‘ Once I had a shock. In an engagement with the Lyme officers, by night, one of them was killed by the man we called poor Tom, who was afterwards taken and condemned. I was at the trial in disguise. But though much was said to him by the judge, and afterwards by the chaplain, about his having offended Heaven, I could not depart from the principle taught me by my father, who thought himself inspired, that it was Heaven’s own doing ; therefore I thought it could not be a sin. The best argument, however, which I know against it, is my present situation. By the loss of my dear Fair Trader I am absolutely ruined, and must again go before the mast. I am doubly and trebly outlawed, and a reward offered for me as a murderer, though I did not fire the gun ; another instance of the execrable tyranny of our rulers. Hence I am a stag at bay ; and if I am hanged, or more blood is spilt, let those answer for it who are the cause.’

“The infatuated Bowser had now ended his tale, which filled me with reflections not over pleasant. I could not say as of Hamlet—

“‘O! what a noble mind is here o’erthrown.’

I could not even flatter myself that the man was not too far gone in vicious habits to be reclaimed, could he be restored to society. But still there appeared some one or two seeds of a better fruit, that made me regret that more care had not been bestowed upon their cultivation. In one thing I felt serious, which was, to wish all crackbrained enthusiasts at the devil.

“I did not fail to show to this misguided man the sophistry of his reasoning; but what you predicted came to pass—brandy, sensuality, and probably *fear* of being enlightened, had closed all his faculties. He wished for safety, but not to be reformed. It was too late.

“‘All that you say, Mr. Willoughby,’ observed he, ‘may be very true, and I suppose I shall be punished hereafter for not knowing better now. But that’s not the present question, which is, whether, if I leave off these courses, (which, I confess I have long had a horror of, for I can’t sleep o’ nights,) any prospect can be given me that I may

live in safety? If to have saved your life, and never to have done mischief for mischief's sake, can recommend me for a pardon, perhaps I may yet do ; or at least not wear myself away with wretchedness.—If not, I have nothing left for it but to go to sea again, and shoot others, or be shot myself, as the case may happen.'

" I was shocked at this despair, for it bespoke an abandonment I had not expected. To feel the way, however, I asked what resource he had, if any, provided it were possible to procure for him the security he required. He seemed pleased, yet puzzled at the question ; for he said he had not a friend in the world, unless it was a sister, whom he had not seen for twenty years, to whom his father had bequeathed his property, and who was married to a man, as he said, ' well to do ; ' a merchant near Falmouth. I took her direction, and, as you may be in the neighbourhood, your inquiries, and the use you may make of this narrative, may possibly facilitate what I may be able to do for this poor devil, whom I quit to-morrow.

" Meantime I am your brother adventurer,

" E. W."

This epistle reached me at Exeter, in my way farther west ; and it communicated so much of the writer's feeling for this unfortunate, that I lost no time in pushing on to Falmouth,—whose romantic valley, with the sparkling arm of the sea that penetrates it, and the old Tudor Castle that defends it, would have repaid my journey had I had no other object. I was, however, still more recompensed by finding out Mrs. Stanniforth, Bowser's sister, and her husband, to whom I related all Willoughby's adventure, and all the hopes he had conceived of her brother's reformation. The good woman shed tears of joy at the thought of being instrumental towards it, and the good man, who was of a grave and reflecting physiognomy, promised all he could to second it.

“ I must, however, tell you, Sir,” said he, “ I have no great hopes of permanent success, even if we succeed in getting my poor brother-in-law whitewashed.”

I asked why ?

“ Merely,” returned he, “ that, according to the old proverb, ‘ what's bred in the bone will never come out of the flesh.’ There is certainly some negative good in Bowser ; that is, he is not so bad

as he might be. But I have always observed, that early dissolute habits are difficult to eradicate ; and, from long observation of the life, manners, and principles of a professed smuggler, I should say, impossible. However," added this quietly-sagacious man, " we will not abandon the attempt from thinking it hopeless. I am in possession of a fair sum which, but for his vices, might have been his. It has much contributed to better my own fortune, and I hold it my duty to return a competent part of it, if the conduct that forfeited it is really changed."

I could not help looking at my new acquaintance with respect for these sentiments, worthy the soundest mind and best heart that ever graced our nature. I shook his hand with the sincerest esteem ; and, upon a consultation, it was resolved to invite Bowser over to Goodbarn, the name of his brother-in-law's place, where he might remain till his safety might be secured to him by law, and afterwards if he pleased, and as long as he pleased.

" However," said the good Stanniforth, " this must not be done by halves ; he must not be in a state of dependence ; we will give him an annuity

sufficient for his wants, and secured to him by law."

"Better and better," said I; and I left this excellent couple, to concert matters with Willoughby; more satisfied with human nature than I had for a very long time been.

Alas! that I am forced to make an end of this warning history so different from what I had hoped, and what others may, perhaps, expect. Jack Tomlins, as everybody said he would be, was hanged; and justice thus being satisfied, and the nest concerned in the Fair Trader, as was supposed, entirely broken up, a free pardon was at last obtained for the rest of the crew, and, of course, Bowser among them. He profited by it for some time, to reside happily with his brother and sister; he enjoyed their company, their table, their garden, and their children; he was even, notwithstanding his known life, noticed by the people of Falmouth. But in a few, a very few months, all this began to flag. He grew melancholy, if not sulky; the habits and conversation of his relations did not suit him, still less their attempt to engage him in religious exercises, and least of all in religious studies. He was now, therefore, much by himself; took more brandy and tobacco (which,

indeed, he had never left off); and was observed to cast a wistful eye at the sea, which he watched every day from the shore at Falmouth, where he revelled at the public-houses most noted for smugglers. At length, after receiving a letter from his former owners at Nantes, he resolved to visit them;—which, thinking it but natural, Stanniforth did not oppose. Once there, however, he never returned, and the next time he was heard of was in the capacity of captain of another Fair Trader:—exemplifying in this the moral of the philosophical old song—

“ The Devil was sick,
The Devil a Monk would be ;
The Devil got well—
The Devil a Monk was he.”

Willoughby, who gave me this account, and who actually went again to Nantes to ascertain his real situation, was in despair at this termination of his scheme. He found him, he said, plunged in apathy as to character and prospects, and only anxious to stave off reflection; kindled a little, and but a little, by the exertion necessary for the usual voyage of adventure, but afterwards relapsing into the lowest state of crapulence, as best leading to forgetfulness.

Willoughby was shocked at the marked and

rapid alteration that appeared in him, both in body and mind, all announcing a premature decay ; and when he noted a dangerous increase of his indulgence in brandy, " Do not blame it," said he, " what must be, must be ! It makes me drunk, and takes away my senses—the only real happiness that is left me." After this we heard no more of him.

Do not let this story be thought of no importance, or without a moral, which it may be well to impress upon all minds, particularly those of the young and thoughtless. It marks too well how difficult, if not impossible, it is to conquer bad habits if allowed to gain head, and grow inveterate. Let no one suppose that, meaning to take but one step, he can be sure that he will not take two, or that having advanced to a certain point in libertinism, he can return at pleasure to the security of virtue. That security, after all my travels, I found to be the great, if not the only *basis* of the happiness I sought. I say *basis*, because nothing, I discovered, was so false, if taken as an abstract proposition, as the celebrated line—

" Virtue *alone* is happiness below."

If this mean no more than that without virtue

there is no happiness, it is equivocally expressed ; if, that Virtue alone suffices, it is not true. Poor Yawn was virtuous, and Gorewell, and Lackland ; nor was Fawknor stained with any uncommon vice ; yet they were any thing but happy ; while those who were so,—Heartfree, Blythfield, Lovegrove, Freeman—though virtue was the principal source of their content, yet she had many tributary streams, arising from taste, temper, station, and habits, to replenish and keep her in vigour, freshness, and beauty. My search told me that no wicked, or very imprudent man could be happy ; but that a virtuous one must *necessarily* be so, on account of his virtue alone, was contradicted by all experience.

SECTION THE LAST.

“How like you the young German, the Duke of Saxony’s nephew?”

My travels and their object had now become so interesting, and had filled my mind with so much useful observation, that I protracted them to a considerable extent, and went over to the Continent in the pleasant pursuit. This opened a new world to me, and was made still more interesting by the contrast it enabled me to form between Englishmen and foreigners.

Shall I confess that, with all our boasted superiority in laws, in government, in commerce, in the spread of knowledge, arts, and manufactures; in the genius of some, the learning of others, and the independence and comfort of all; the balance of happiness, in my mind, was greatly in favour of the

people I visited. Without diving very deep into moral or political philosophy, to ascertain the cause of this would not be difficult. It lies altogether on the surface, like the happiness itself which I sought.

Thank God ! have I often said, when I have seen a German peasant, with his wife, his pipe, his brown bread, and his sour krout, the picture of health and good-humour, notwithstanding mathematical demonstrations, by various apostles of liberty, that he *ought* to be the reverse ; thank God ! I have said, I see in this all the power of *practical* feeling over the whole array of theoretical reasoning. These people know nothing of Socrates or Cicero, or Jeremy Bentham, or the Edinburgh Review ; nor even of the Penny Magazine, nor Reform ; they are ignorant alike of Epicureans, or Stoics, Whigs, or Tories ; they work for their bread, and get it ; and their constitutional good nature does all the rest. Again, when I have seen the females of the same degree in the same country, with an erect look, and elastic tread, under burdens that would break the back of many a London footman, yet all the while giving a nod of good-will, and wishing their “ guten morgen,” and “ guten tag’s,” to all their fellow-creatures, whether known to them or not ; when universal cheerful-

ness and alacrity, and desire to do good turns to strangers, as well as to one another, accompany the whole population, who at the same time are as orderly as good-natured;—when I compare this with our growling countrymen at home, who even seek to be crammed with discontent by those who well know how to cram them—who shall say that the balance of comfort is with our vaunted England? Even in morals and obedience to the laws, on which we *formerly* used to plume ourselves, we are exceeded by these simpler Germans, among whom I never witnessed (in Nassau at least, to which I chiefly confine these observations), a street quarrel, a failure of respect to their superiors or to one another, a drunkard, a common prostitute, or a beggar.

But this is nothing to what prevails in the interior. More family happiness (if so much,) I never saw. Husbands and wives, parents and children*, relations, distant as well as near;—they seem always together, as forming the purest source

* A mother's love for her infant children need scarcely be mentioned; but what struck me most in this respect, was the fondness and intense pleasure of a German father to his infants. It shone out in his eyes, and he seemed never tired of contributing to their amusement.

of their pleasures; and nothing so common in their daily walks, as to see them grouped as preferred companions. Nay, I have seen young married people dancing together at public balls ! What would be said of them in London or Paris ? Thus, I should say that not to enjoy conjugal felicity was to be out of fashion. But can I then omit also to say, that the most attractive example of these domestic virtues is to be found in the palace of the sovereign ; where, from affability, accomplishments, good humour, and good sense, princes and princesses are, what they ought to be—models for the imitation of their subjects.

Political economists have sometimes made the clothing and taste in dress of the lower orders a test of the ease and comfort of a population. If this be so, these Germans are eminently fortunate, though under apparent poverty. The labour and industry of the lowest females is most extraordinary. They are emphatically of all work ; hewers of wood, drawers of water, and diggers of earth ; they seem above corporeal rest, or they find it only in the spinning-wheel. Their wages are a seeming nothing ; yet all are decently, I had almost said tastefully clothed. There is even an air of something approaching to elegance in their figures, and

the light and well fitted jacket and petticoat which set them off. They are in general *bien chaussé*; and, above all, the reeking horror of a black worsted stocking is unknown. Their drapery owes much also to a pleasing contrast of variegated colours (the rich crimson predominating,) in the apron and handkerchief, fancifully disposed. This is at once imposing and picturesque. But this is even exceeded by the form and decoration of the head, if the mere disposition of tresses, without the slightest covering, can be called decoration. The hair, however, is generally of the darkest hue, and in the commonest, lowest creature, in her dirtiest attire as to other points, is pinned or plaited, not merely with spruceness, but elegance, and invariably, in the very poorest, crowned with a high-backed tortoiseshell comb. This gives to their small and well-shaped heads the outline of a gem; and their figure, as they approach you from a distance, tall and well-proportioned, their water-pails on their heads, with one arm elevated to support them, and the other in a curve to the side, give really the idea of something Etruscan*.

* This is not too strong. Sir Walter, in *Waverley*, felt almost the same thing as to the Scotch peasants, even in so dirty a place as Tully Veolan. "Three or four village girls, returning

But are there no drawbacks? Yes! their features are hard; and, as to morals, there are low pilferers, but not many. There is so far cheating in the shops, that they have two prices, and foreigners are thought legitimate game. But there are no robberies, still less burglaries; and to my astonishment, I have seen a vine-clad house in the open street exposed to all marauders, yet the grapes allowed to ripen, and be gathered in security by the owner. Moreover the Germans, one and all, are an out-of-door people, and seek their chief enjoyments in the air.

They boast not Italian skies, nor English gardens; but the alcove, the branching covert, the sycamore walk, and a thousand seats, are filled in some part or other of the day (and always overflow on a holiday,) with happy faces, made still happier by the admirable music so gratifying to a German ear; which, being afforded gratis, is enjoyed by the poorest as well as the rich. All this eminently bespeaks the national character—content; and this pleasing feature lights up the whole

from the well, or brook, with pitchers and pails upon their heads, with their thin short gowns and single petticoats, uncovered heads and braided hair, somewhat resembled Italian forms of landscape.”

countenance of the people, whatever their avocations.

My greatest wonder was to learn, where wages were so low, how the luxuries enjoyed could be so regularly afforded. The poorest German labourer, or soldier, smokes his three pound of tobacco per month (about sixteen-pence sterling,) and the lowest female has her coffee and biscuit. For this they work and work hard; yet care by no means seems to predominate.

If you enter a shop, anxiety to sell does not seem the absorbing object of the master, so as to incapacitate him for anything else. Whatever the state of his affairs, he is easy and cheerful, always civil, and has no black looks if you do not buy. His manners, dress, and address, are equal to your own, and prove him at peace with himself, as well as with you. But it is the affability of all the upper ranks to all the lower, though by no means undignified, or too familiar, which gives an evident increase to the content that seems naturally implanted in a subject of Nassau.

Can this be without, in some measure, being derived from the character and manners of the sovereign? If, as has been said by observers of manners, you may know the disposition of the

master of a house, by the reception given you by his servants, so, unless influenced by adventitious circumstances, the character of a ruler may be gathered from the manners and condition of his subjects. In this respect I found, during my residence among this happy people, that the Government was markedly patriarchal ; and Gorewell was but right in comparing the Duke to the good Duke of the forest of Ardennes. What would he have said had he seen the same personage in his private, as well as his public family, giving and receiving happiness, and shedding it over an accomplished court, all composed of the personal friends of himself, or his predecessors ? Still more, what would have become of Gorewell's cynicism at seeing this done in conjunction with a consort, not less unrivalled in beauty than in elegance of mind, not more revered as a sovereign, than admired and beloved as a woman ? For myself, I can only say that I never expected to see another Lady Isabel in the world ; but found her in a foreigner, and that foreigner a princess*.

The reigning family, as well as the whole state of Nassau, made large and pleasing additions

* Paulina Duchess of Nassau, daughter of Prince Paul of Wirtemberg.

to the stock of worldly happiness entered in my journal.

But I must return from this continental digression, to the land of my fathers ;—which, with all its acknowledged superiority in institutions, and the conveniences of life, might borrow a profitable lesson from the foreigners it affects to despise. These, in the one little simple secret, of a moderate and contented disposition, beat all our political and even moral philosophers, our demagogues and champions of liberty, to nothing, in the only real object of life—happiness ; and prove into how small a point this grand, wide, and prolific subject may be reduced, after all the volumes that have been written upon it.

Theories the most ingenious, speculations the most abstruse, the deepest learning, the widest search, are often labour in vain to those who waste their lives upon it ; while, close at their elbow, may stand an exemplification of all that is wanted, in a placid temper and contented mind.

“ But you *ought not* to be either placid or contented,” says a growling theoretical philanthropist. “ You are poor, others rich ; you are condemned to obey, others command. You have no voice in the State, though wiser, perhaps, than those who have ;

you have no titles, others are hereditary lords; in fact, you are a slave and a beast of burden, while others ‘proudly snuff’ the air, and skim along the main.’ ”

These are sad hits against poor homely good-humour, and would operate like slow poison, not more slow than sure, upon all minds naturally gloomy or naturally proud. It is—

“ The leperous distilment, whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body.”

To those who are thus properly prepared as subjects for knavery to work upon, there never are wanting knaves to work; and in this emergency it is to Nature alone (a kindly and contented nature, the best gift of Heaven, beyond all talents and all riches,) that we owe not only our best happiness, but the best security for its continuance. This, indeed, is that sunshine of the mind which exceeds the real sun that lights and warms us, and may be felt even within the walls of a prison, where not a ray of the great orb is permitted to enter.

Of this, from observation, both at home and abroad, I had become so convinced, that I always preferred asking what was a man’s nature and dis-

position, to what was his religion, or what his portion of liberty; and, though it may move the censure of many, I would sooner trust a well-natured, open-hearted Turk, than a cold, calculating, ascetic Christian. Then as to happiness, my travels convinced me how very little real difference is made in the sum of it, by rank, fame, or fortune. A Duke or a link-boy has the same passions, ambition, disappointments, affections, and sufferings; and it depends entirely upon themselves whether the amount of their happiness shall not be the same. The whole is in the mind, and the minds of all ranks are equally disposed to happiness from nature. Hence, therefore, inequality of happiness is a work of our own, and altogether artificial; and all who are content have equality, spite of appearances. It is the wish for change, the panting after what we have not, or the hankering after what we *have had*, that generates uneasiness sometimes unbearable. He who rises in his station, a little and a little higher, though his original was the very lowest, is more gratified than he who is born in the highest class, and cannot change without descending. Alexander wept because he had no more worlds to conquer. Had he been a serjeant of Alexander, instead of Alexander himself, he would

not have wept. When Turenne was killed, one of his own drummers contented himself with saying, "Eh bien, voilà un pas de gagné." Monticululli, who had opposed Turenne, had no such comfort; he was left without a rival, could reap no more laurels, and sheathed his sword.

Thus there is in reality no inequality of happiness in the world, as far as in equality of lot is concerned; all the rest belongs to ourselves.

Then what is the secret? Why are we perpetually struggling, and, therefore, *un*-happy? The philosopher answers, because of the *false estimate of things*, that often appears in the wisest and best reasoned theories of what is or is not the *summum bonum*; while mere animal spirits, youth, innocence, health, and fair weather (the last by no means the least of the ingredients,) tell us every thing we wish to know, better than all the treatises that ever were composed.

Were I to say, then, who was the happiest, I should point at him who had least irritability; at him—

"Who Fortune's buffets and rewards
Had ta'en with equal thanks."

It may be said, this militates against the gifts of reason. I do not undervalue them, but not the

less do I think of the lamb, gay and frolic, though doomed to the knife.

“ Had he thy reason, would he skip and play ?”

It is this skip and play of life which, while it lasts, carries it hollow before all the doctors, both the proctors, and all the grave personages that ever visited the cave of Trophonius. It is here that I found happiness, as far as I could find it, in its most genuine and unadulterated form.

But, says a theorist, you confine yourself, then, to youth, and frolic, and animal spirits ; to tipsy dance and jollity ; you do not embrace the whole of your subject, and look not at misery, though so unavoidable. You are, therefore, a mere partial describer, not a philosopher.

Not so ; I have not forgot the misery, though I paint what I think the more obvious and universal source of happiness. And if I am a partial painter, you will please to recollect I undertook to be no more. My object was to rouse the game, leaving it to others to describe its nature and qualities. This I have done ; with what success, let other huntsmen decide.

But the chase is at an end. Again behold me in England ; that England, once the seat of many a joy and many a sorrow ; that England where I

first breathed, and first loved, and lost all that I loved ; that country, (alas ! no longer dear,) where, in my days of hope, I saw, or thought I saw,

“ Such forms as glitter in the Muse’s ray ;”

forms that beckoned me to deeds of high emprise, leading, as they said, to happiness and fame ; happiness often enjoyed, too often defeated. These I still see, though now only in memory, and must not think to look upon their like again. Farewell, then,

“ Sweet, radiant Forms, whose looks so bright and pure,
Still seem to watch and cheer my evening road ;
For still one joy remains, that not obscure
Nor useless all, my vacant years have flow’d.”

THE END OF FIELDING.

APPENDIX.

Note, page 282.

THE Editor is under a doubt here, whether or not to notice some strictures upon the conduct of the amiable Sovereign of Nassau, which he has read with concern, not from their cogency, (for never was anything less tenable, either in fact or argument,) but because the writer, in other respects, shows himself an amusing traveller. The author of the publication called ‘My Note-Book,’ allows he has “heard many travellers *lauding the Duke of Nassau; and has read passages in books, holding him up as a model for all Princes to imitate.*” He also believes that the Duke is a very quiet, unostentatious sort of a gentleman; for he knows that he descends from his hunting-seat, *die Platte*, to dine at the *table d’hôte* of the Kursaal.

Here, then, we have the amiable picture of a Sovereign Prince, divesting himself of his insignia

and his *étiquette*, to enjoy himself *en égal* in the midst of his subjects. His affability

“ Like mercy, is twice bless'd ;

It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.”

He might have added, too, that both the Duke and his illustrious family mingle with the lowest of his subjects, on terms that recal the patriarchal times to memory. Witness the *fêtes* sometimes given by the good townsmen of Wiesbaden, at their own expense, to him, and those given by him in return, at which, without distinction of rank, all classes are invited to attend.

“ Nor do I deny,” says this critic of Sovereigns, that “ *he (the Duke) is a very constant husband ; a kind father ; and that high-bred sportsmen are permitted to range over his hunting grounds.*”

Pretty well this, in favour of a man whom he is going to abuse ; and we must expect, therefore, something terrible to be coming ; something precise, and anything but vague ; something also well sifted, and particularly well proved, to be able to deteriorate, as is attempted, from the character of a Prince allowed by his accuser himself to be in so many points so worthy. And what does the reader think is the accusation, and how proved ? Why, the Statist, in ascending a mountain, met a

woman who was carrying dinner to her family, who were at work too far off to come for it themselves. So far, not much harm. But then this woman, and other labourers too, not only corn-growers, but vine-dressers, did—(Heaven defend the Duke!)—did live in the midst of a most plentiful country upon meagre diet, compared to the Flemings, or even the French.

This might be questioned as a fact, even if it were anything to the purpose. There is, perhaps, no tract of country in Europe so abounding in crops of all kinds, as the region between Cassel in Picardy, and Brussels. And yet never were peasantry so squalid, through want and destitution, as the objects (from misery scarcely human,) who cultivate that plentiful region. But what is even the Statist's proof of the wants he so deplures in the peasantry of Nassau? They had only, he says, "a little animal food, stewed with vegetables, potatoes, herbs, or boiled grain; rye or barley-bread, milk, *stewed or roasted apples*, and on Sundays a very little butter and cheese. *This forms their ordinary meals.*" Why, the very enumeration makes one's mouth water, though an Englishman; and the Statist himself confesses, that by his boiling grain with milk, and stewing herbs with butter, the Nassau peasant

makes more of what is within his reach than the Irish cottier." If so, and the Duke so much to blame, how infinitely worse must be the King of Ireland!

Well, but the winter is very dreary in Nassau! So it is everywhere, though not the Duke's fault. But it is even bitter cold! and snow covers the ground! This, too, is a misfortune that happens sometimes, without a Sovereign being to blame. Yes! but in Nassau it is "*scarcely* within the power of the peasantry to get *sufficient* fuel to cook their simple food." Then, it seems, they do get *something* towards it, though not *sufficient*; which is often not the case in England, Scotland, or Ireland. All this, however, is made the fault of the Duke, and does away, in the mind of our tender-hearted traveller, the impression made by his personal virtues, so ignorantly *lauded* by others. For, after having mentioned them as above stated, he adds, with most logical inferences, "But I cannot forget my conversations with, nor the poverty and *mud-built habitations* of, his vassals, the peasantry, nor that Nassau abounds with maize, vines, tobacco, buckwheat, and has wood and coal, &c. &c. &c.

Well! has not England, and still more Ireland, *mud-built habitations*, and, God knows, poverty enough! And do not they both abound in farming

produce, and in wood and coal? To be sure, a house built only of mud, to one who had never stirred out of Cockney-land, gives no idea but of the kennel; and to live even in a *clay*-built cottage very little better. But surely not so to this our enlightened searcher after *realities*. He might, or ought to, tell you that a clay-built wall is, by the method called *Pisé*, as strong as stone; that many of the houses of the metropolis of Nassau are of clay, or unburnt bricks, almost without cement, but coated with mud, well dried, and whitewashed; nay, that a poor man's cottage, composed of stout wattles, and coated in the same manner with mud, is no such uncomfortable abode, as many houses of substantial tradesmen prove in Wiesbaden itself*.

* A gentleman who resided many months in that town was much struck with this, but suspecting such a mode of building could not be lasting, took an opportunity of the pulling down a large old house, to ask how long it had lasted. To his astonishment he was told, at least a hundred years, possibly a hundred and fifty. It was exactly as described—hurdles plastered with mud, and whitewashed.

We wonder the traveller, with the mud discomforts, did not mention another miserable want, to the inculcation of the Duke; for most of his female subjects, of very respectable rank, though under the highest are, in the severest weather, without caps or bonnets.

N.B. The King of Great Britain and Ireland reigns over myriads of subjects without shoes or stockings. Who can allow him any personal merit?

Even the fact, then, of the misery is disputable, both from this account of their habitations, and the bill of fare for the poor, which the Statist himself has furnished. He ought also, as a just Statist, to have added, (as he no doubt would, had he known it,) the wages of the poor he describes as so miserable, compared with the prices of things. The truth is, a labourer in this oppressed country can obtain, all the year round, nearly seven shillings English a week (seven shillings during nine months, and twopence less during the three winter months). Many in England have little more, and are reckoned well paid indeed at ten shillings : but then the English labourer buys his meat at from fourpence to sixpence and sevenpence a pound ; the Nassauer at from twopence to fourpence. Bread, a small loaf in England at twopence ; in Nassau, about the same quantity, not quite three farthings. The best wheaten flour, at five farthings, and excellent brown bread at a halfpenny a pound.—So much for the fact.

O! but the Duke is a holder of the tithes of corn, is the proprietor of the mineral waters, and all “ *that can be made out of the territory*, after barely supporting the peasantry, who shiver fireless in winter, is his.”——

Does this mean in the mind of the traveller, that

the whole soil of the Duchy belongs to the Sovereign? Are there no landed proprietors save the Duke? No Counts or Barons, or rich tradesmen, with their châteaux, their farms, their vineyards, and their forests, in all the Duchy, and particularly in the Rheingau and the Taunus? Are all the gay houses and establishments that have doubled his metropolis in twenty years, the exclusive property of what the Statist, about as truly as facetiously, calls the supreme Cacique of the country? That the Duke has a very large estate, is true; and as true that out of it he affords to be a magnificent prince, a munificent patron, and a kind and generous protector to a numerous circle of friends and dependants; out of it too, (which ought to be no little merit in the eyes of the Statist, though he has forgotten to mention it,) he supports so much of the expenses of his government, (defraying the whole of his civil list, and many pensions,) that the public taxes are in consequence extremely low. But it pleases this critic of Sovereigns to represent him as sole proprietor of all the woods, vines, and corn in the country, and therefore to blame him because he will not let these (I suppose the Statist is a Reformer, and I must therefore call them) the *true* lords of the soil,

the labourers, steal, waste, destroy, and rob, *ad libitum*, in all his woods, and corn-fields, and vineyards. He observes in terms, that in all the vineyard country the peasants are effectually restrained from eating the grapes which they *with such incessant labour and anxiety cultivate among rocky precipices*.

Is this the remark of an enlightened traveller, or the sickly vision of a theorist? Can the ground, in or out of Nassau, be cultivated without incessant labour? Is the growth of corn in England spontaneous? Then as to the fact of the cultivator not being allowed to eat the grapes, his information here again fails him, for during the vintage the labourer is allowed whatever quantity he can consume, as part of his wages.

But the Duke actually puts the laws of property in force against them; and “although his forests abound with fallen trees and underwood,” they are not allowed to take a stick, or if they do they are sent to prison for such “*peccadilloes*.”

Here once more the information of the Statist is unfortunate. If the peasant steal or destroy wood, he is punished as he ought to be; but as to not being allowed to take a stick, he might have learned that one day in the week (generally every

Saturday) the forests are open to the peasantry, to gather and carry home all the loose wood they can find.

But I should be glad to know if the Statist himself is a farmer, or landed proprietor; or gardener, or even a housekeeper? Or, if he has a good wood-yard, granary, or larder? If he has, let the poor of his neighbourhood try his benevolence a little, before he writes another inculpation of a Sovereign, who does not like to be robbed of his wood any more than another man; and whom truth compels him to *describe* as most amiable. If *the Statist*, then, abounds in fallen trees and underwood, or grapes, or vegetables, by all means let those who have none carry them off at pleasure; it is nothing but a *peccadillo*, and they ought not to be punished. In harvest, let them cut his corn for themselves, and not for him; or if his larder have more geese and turkeys than he can eat himself, let his servants and dependants revel in them at will, upon pain of his losing the credit for all good qualities for which he may have been foolishly *lauded* by those who know him best.

But the poor Duke has other sins to answer for, and, sooth to say, he will hardly be able to acquit himself; for he is the possessor of, and actually keeps

up, the ancient “crag-cresting” castle of Marksberg, where once there were *oubliettes*.

This alone is deemed a crime by this far-seeing traveller; for though the mere fact of being lord of such a castle hurts his sensibility, and therefore is one of his reasons *for not giving any credit to the Duke's character*, not one word is added to show that there is anything to complain of from its present existence. But what a sad tyrant, then, instead of the good-natured Sovereign we think him, must our good King William be, who is wicked enough to keep up the Tower of London, where, some hundreds of years ago, there were actually murders committed! This, however, is not the worst: for if the Duke has erected houses, hotels, baths and fountains, at his own expense, the Statist will give him “*no credit for it, when he knows that even such buildings have been constructed to add to his personal revenues.*”

This is “the most unkindest cut of all” in the Duke; which he surely can never get over; and woe betide the English, Scotch, or Irish landlord who seeks to improve his estate by laying out money, and employing the people upon it, if *he is also to reap the advantage.*

Poor King George III., who was so fond of

farming ! What should we say of a statistical traveller who entered in his note book, "Visited his Majesty's farm at Richmond ; the buildings, crops, and cattle all in the highest order ; the labourers all comfortable and happy ; it causes the King a considerable outlay, and many people *laud* him for it ; *but I give him no credit*, for I find if there is any profit he pockets it himself !"

These are the sins of commission in the would-be critic of the Sovereign of Nassau. Those of omission are worse. He has omitted to tell you that the attention thus paid to improvement, though it has occasioned the great *crime* of being *profitable*, might, like all other speculations, have occasioned loss ; and that while the profit has been shared by thousands who bless their Sovereign for his spirited experiments, the risk was his and his alone. By his enterprising spirit, and attention to the convenience of the visiters of the baths, those visiters alone have amounted in one season to twelve thousand, while the native population does not exceed eight thousand. We have already seen that other omission, where, in stating *ad invidiam*, and with astonishing exaggeration, the territorial revenues of the Duke, he totally forgot to tell us how they were applied ; that is, very much for public purposes. He has

also omitted one other little circumstance, which, for an equalizer of poor and rich, is rather surprising; for the predecessors of this selfish Duke having voluntarily offered to divest themselves of absolute power, and give their subjects a free Constitution, but dying before the design was accomplished, the present Sovereign, immediately on succeeding, applied himself to that patriotic task, and brought it to perfection.

He was the first, therefore, who assembled the States, and by a series of laws and explanatory enactments, confirmed the constitution, and the best privileges of his people.

Nothing of this sort, however, has been even glanced at by the author of the 'Note Book.'

Upon the whole, then, though we dare not venture to accuse a gentleman whom we have not the honour to know, of a splenetic distortion of what he may have seen; still we look in vain for that reach of observation which takes in all parts of a subject before it decides upon an insulated point; and still less for that even-handed justice, which dictates to an unprejudiced mind, that if it chuse without special reasons to charge the defects of a country upon its Sovereign, on the one hand, the Sovereign has a right to receive credit for all that

has made that country happy and prosperous, on the other.

This seems not to have been understood by the author, in the lecture he has given us on Political Economy and the character of Sovereigns. Luckily, however, for the Duke, he has stated his reasons.

THE END.







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